

---

# The Revolutionary War

---

## Table of Contents

The Revolutionary War Begins	1	Problems with the British Navy	50
The Strategies Unfold	2	Jefferson Takes Action	51
The Battle of Breed's Hill	3	The War of 1812 Opens	52
General Howe's Strategy	4	Test IV	53
Thomas Paine's <i>Common Sense</i>	5	The War on Land and Water	54
The Move Toward Independence	6	The British Burn Washington	55
The Fight for New York City	7	The "Star-Spangled Banner"	56
A Christmas Gamble	8	The Battle of New Orleans	57
Washington's Continental Army	9	The Impact of the War of 1812	58
1777: The Year of the Hangman	10	The Madison Presidency	59
A British Strategy Goes Awry	11	Expansion and Panic	60
Victory at Saratoga	12	The Monroe Presidency	61
A Turning Point in the War	13	The Election of 1824	62
Test I	14	The Development of Factories	63
Life at Valley Forge	15	The Lowell System	64
America Gains an Ally	16	Growth in America's Cities	65
The Battle of Monmouth	17	Growth in America's Economy	66
The War on the Frontier	18	Test V	67
The War Moves to the South	19	Changing Politics in America	68
Victories and Losses	20	Andrew Jackson as President	69
Final Showdown in the South	21	The Nullification Crisis	70
Benedict Arnold: America's Traitor	22	Jackson and the B.U.S.	71
Victory at Yorktown	23	Panic Grips the Nation	72
The End of the Conflict	24	New Party Politics	73
A Republican Form of Government	25	Van Buren at the Helm	74
The Articles of Confederation	26	The Boisterous Campaign of 1840	75
Shays's Rebellion	27	A Reform Movement Sweeps America	76
Test II	28	A Campaign Against Alcohol Abuse	77
The Northwest Ordinance	29	Religious Communes: The Shakers	78
Meeting in Philadelphia	30	New Harmony and Oneida	79
From Compromise to Constitution	31	Rights for Women	80
A New Constitution	32	Test VI	81
The First Presidency, 1789	33	Crime and Punishment	82
Hamilton's Financial Program	34	Education in America	83
America in 1790	35	A Crusade for the Mentally Ill	84
The Birth of Political Parties	36	An American Renaissance	85
1793 and 1794: Crisis Years	37	James Fenimore Cooper	86
Eli Whitney's Cotton Gin	38	Emerson and Transcendentalism	87
John Adams Becomes President	39	Thoreau and Walden	88
A New Capital City	40	Nathaniel Hawthorne	89
Test III	41	Washington Irving	90
Quasi-War with France	42	Herman Melville	91
The Federalists Respond to Criticism	43	Edgar Allen Poe	92
The Election of 1800	44	Walt Whitman	93
Jefferson Takes the Reins	45	Harriet Beecher Stowe	94
Politics and the Judiciary	46	Popular Culture in America	95
The Barbary Pirates	47	Test VII	96
A Conspiring Vice President	48	Answer Key	97
The Second Great Awakening	49	Bibliography	106

---

# The Revolutionary War Begins

---

In the spring of 1775, American colonists were in rebellion against the Crown of England. At dawn, on April 19, militiamen gathered on the village green outside Lexington, Massachusetts, a few miles from Boston, and exchanged shots with hundreds of British troops.

Later that day, at Concord, not much more than five miles from Lexington, Minutemen fired at British soldiers across the Concord River Bridge after the Redcoats had burned the village's liberty tree and dumped 500 musket balls into a nearby pond.

In retreat to Boston, the British faced withering fire from patriots hidden behind trees and stone walls, even firing from village houses and barns. Accustomed to the tactics of war, British troops would leave the road, flank around unsuspecting militiamen, and bayonet them in the back.

Ironically, casualties were limited that day largely because colonists were armed with the same ineffectual muskets the British were using. Issued to colonial militiamen by British authorities, this clunky weapon, known as the "Brown Bess" was extremely inaccurate. Of all the musket balls fired that chaotic day, it is estimated that only 1 in 300 actually hit its mark.

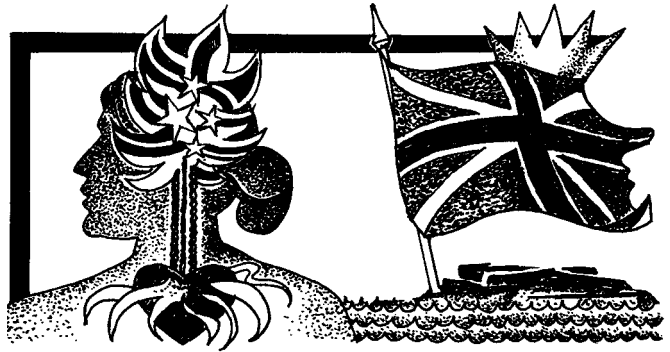
Still, the Redcoats suffered significant losses. By the time they reached their Boston encampment, the bedraggled British had suffered over 200 casualties—73 dead, 174 wounded, and 26 missing. Later, the British called the road of their retreat the "Bloody Chute."

With these battles—Lexington, Concord Bridge, the Bloody Chute—the shooting war of the American Revolution had begun. For the first time, American militiamen had fired on regular British troops.

How had such events occurred? What caused American colonists to abandon their loyalty to Great Britain and take up arms?

It is important to remember that during the 1760s and early 1770s, Great Britain had passed restrictive trade laws, enacted taxes, denied

colonial representation, installed royal governors in every colony, stationed thousands of British troops



in colonial cities, and dissolved colonial legislatures.

Writing a generation after the Revolutionary War, the American patriot, John Adams, who would serve as the second president of the United States, wrote a letter to his friend, Thomas Jefferson, America's third president, about these very circumstances that had led to a shooting war.

What do we mean by the revolution? Do we mean the war? That was no revolution. Only the result of it. The real revolution was affected in the hearts and minds of Americans between 1760 and 1775 before a single drop of blood was shed at Lexington.

Clearly, in the mind of Adams, the events of Lexington and Concord were rooted in years of frustration, harsh British policy, and increasing agitation among colonial subjects over being ruled by British authorities who did not treat them as full British citizens.

The war for American independence lasted from the spring of 1775 to the battle at Yorktown in the fall of 1781. Another two years would pass before a peace treaty was signed by both sides.

---

## *Review and Write*

---

What did John Adams mean by the "real revolution"?

---

# The Strategies Unfold

---

In the spring of 1775, approximately 3,000 British soldiers, commonly referred to in the colonies as Redcoats, were garrisoned in the Boston area. British troops had never been popular with the people of Boston and it was determined that they must be removed.

The commander of the British occupation forces was a general named Thomas Gage, who was also serving as the Crown-appointed governor of the state. (Years earlier, the Massachusetts Assembly had been dissolved, signifying an end to colonial self-government there.)

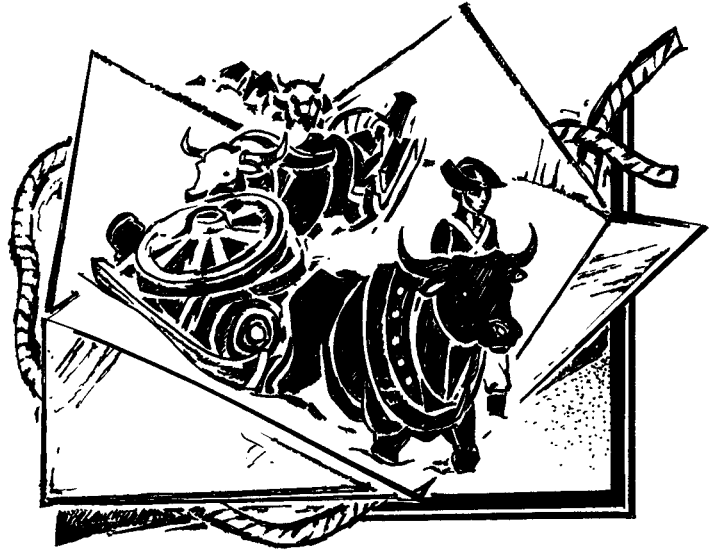
In the days following the clashes at Lexington and Concord, thousands of colonial militiamen and other armed Patriots began gathering outside the city, taking up positions in the hills ringing Boston. But without artillery, Patriot forces did not pose a threat to the occupying forces.

If anyone had large siege cannons in the American colonies, it was the British. Several Patriot leaders, including a young Philadelphian named Benedict Arnold, decided to attempt the capture of the British-controlled Fort Ticonderoga, located to the west in New York, where there were several siege weapons.

Other colonial Patriots had the same idea. A group of Vermont Patriots called the Green Mountain Boys, led by a Vermonter named Ethan Allen, advanced on the British fort and, in May 1775, captured it with Benedict Arnold's help. The capture of Fort Ticonderoga resulted in the seizure of 100 artillery pieces for the Patriot cause.

These much-needed heavy cannons did not arrive in Boston for several months, however. Capturing the artillery pieces was one matter, transporting them overland another. Ethan Allen's men spent the remainder of 1775 dragging the cannons east to Boston. Through the winter of 1775-76, while heavy snows swirled about them, the Patriots loaded the cannons on sleds pulled by oxen. It was a difficult, backbreaking effort.

During the summer of 1775, while Allen's men struggled with the cannons, Benedict Arnold was



involved in a separate military action. Congress determined that American forces should march on British Canada, hoping to bring the province of Quebec into the conflict. A two-pronged invasion of the British territory to the north was planned. Colonel Arnold was to advance secretly through the rugged Maine woods toward Quebec City, while another American officer, General Richard Montgomery, who had earlier served as a British officer, was to move up Lake Champlain toward Montreal.

Both campaigns went badly. Arnold's advance across Maine was harrowing. The men ran out of food, and starvation took many. When the two leaders met up at Quebec in December 1775, Montgomery was killed and Arnold seriously wounded. Many of their men were captured. The colonial effort to seize Canada proved a dismal failure.

---

## *Review and Write*

---

1. Why might Boston Patriots have resented General Thomas Gage?
2. What did colonial forces need to pose a military threat to the occupying British?

---

# The Battle of Breed's Hill

---

Even as Patriots were relieving the British of their cannons at Fort Ticonderoga, a battle in the hills above Boston was unfolding.

Before the cannons arrived in Boston, General Gage intended to remove his troops from the city, but not without a fight. The British made plans to row across the body of water south of Boston, capture Dorchester Heights, then advance on the Patriot center at Cambridge and smash the Rebels, who already numbered 10,000. The British commanders set the date for their advancement for June 18, a Sunday.

However, news of the intended plan reached the Patriot leaders in Cambridge days before the 18th. The rebels moved quickly. To lure the British away from Cambridge and the Rebel positions south of Boston, Patriot colonel, William Prescott, and his men were ordered to the Charlestown peninsula north of Boston to fortify Bunker Hill.

From this position, the colonials could train their guns on the British ships in Boston's harbor and the British would have no choice but to remove them. But such a move would require the Redcoats to advance up the 130-foot tall hill in a direct frontal assault.

On the evening of June 16, Colonel Prescott advanced to Bunker Hill with 1,000 soldiers. Once there, they were to build earthworks where they would take up a defensive position. From atop Bunker Hill, one of Prescott's officers, a military engineer named Richard Gridley, pointed to another hill adjacent to Bunker Hill, and suggested the troops take up positions there. That hill, known as Breed's Hill, was more than a quarter mile closer to the British, even if it was not as high.

Through the night, working quietly to avoid detection by British sentries, the Patriots dug into the Boston-side of Breed's Hill. The next morning, June 17, a Saturday, the British discovered the presence of a rebel army in a fortified position on high ground. General Gage was soon informed.

Gage met with three British generals who had only recently arrived in Boston from England: Henry

Clinton, William Howe, and John Burgoyne. These British officers pressured Gage to order an assault against the rebel earthworks. New to the colonies, these veterans of European campaigns could not fathom why Gage had not removed the presence of Rebel troops around Boston weeks earlier.



After a ranging discussion concerning tactics, it was decided that Gage would order a direct frontal assault. There was great confidence among the British officers that the American rebellion might well be defeated that very day. After all, how could untrained and undisciplined Rebel troops face down the well-trained Redcoats of the King's army?

At 3 p.m., 2,000 British soldiers rowed across the bay and landed at the foot of Breed's Hill. General Gage had placed General Howe in direct command. A confident Howe sent a flanking party out to his left toward a rebel position behind a rail fence where the British faced withering Rebel fire.

As the main column of British troops advanced up Breed's Hill, they, too, met strong Rebel opposition. After retreating, Howe regrouped his men and advanced again, this time stepping over the fallen bodies of their comrades. Once again, the British were pushed back, taking serious casualties.

The day seemed a loss for Howe as he launched a third assault. But tired colonials were running low on ammunition and powder. The defenders of Breed's Hill had no choice but to abandon their positions, but not before they had inflicted nearly 1,300 British casualties. The entire battle had taken place in less than one hour.