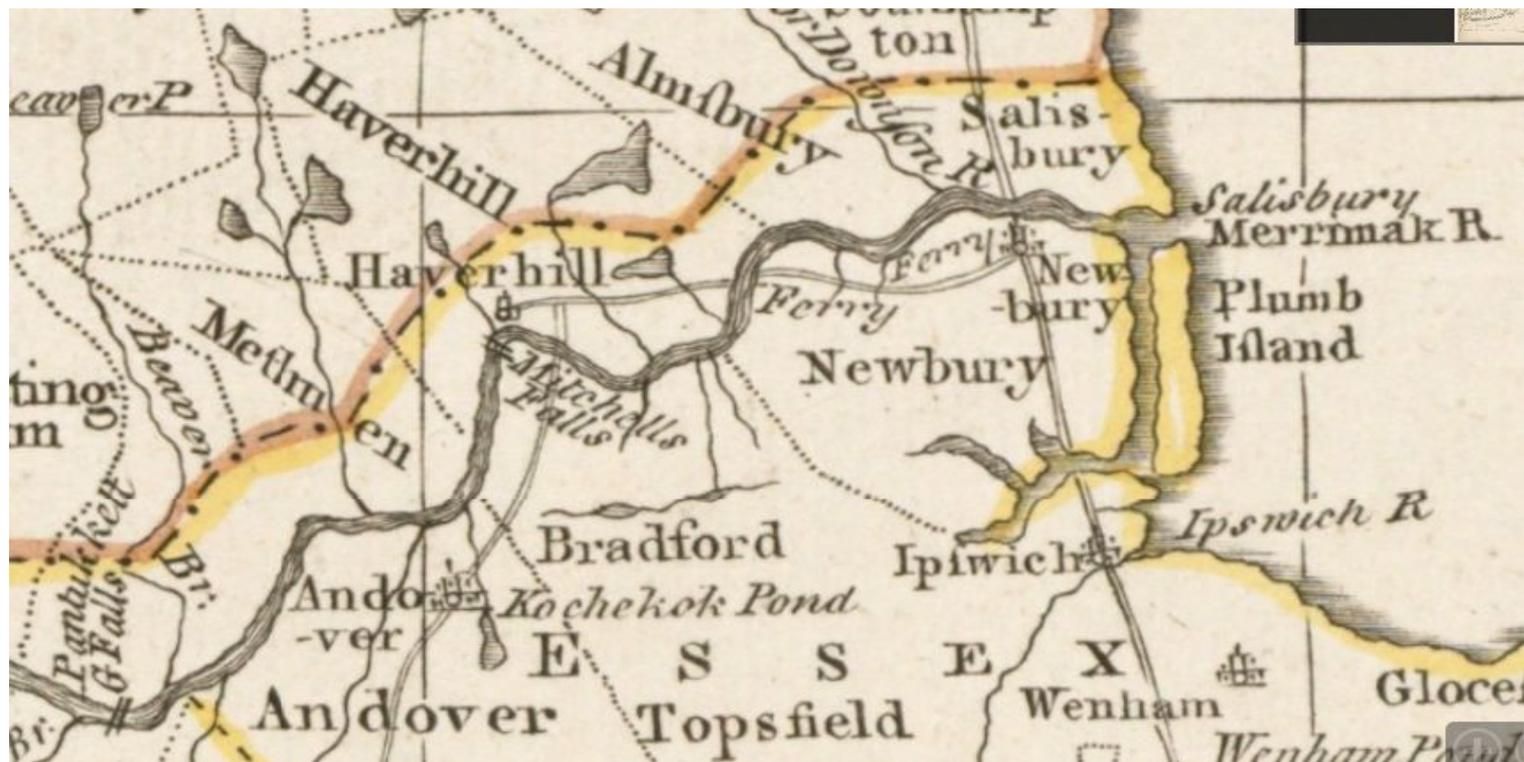


*HEADS OF FAMILIES AND MEN OF  
SUBSTANCE*

*THE RISE OF THE MINUTE MEN IN THE MERRIMACK  
VALLEY*





## *Prelude to War: 1774*

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

## *Order to Create Minute Companies*

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

## *Order to Prepare for War*

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

- Three days later, on October 29, 1775, the Massachusetts Provincial Congress addressed what appropriate military exercise the various militia and minute companies should adopt.
- It is possible that the delegates considered the “Norfolk Exercise”. Developed in England in 1757, the Norfolk Exercise, or “A Plan of Discipline, Composed for the Use of the Militia of the County of Norfolk”, had been adopted by many New England militia companies by 1768 and was declared the official drill of the colony in the early 1770’s.
- However, the Massachusetts Provincial Congress ordered that “it be recommended to the inhabitants of this Province that in order to their perfecting themselves in the Military Art, they proceed in the method ordered by his Majesty in the year 1764, it being, in the opinion of this Congress, best calculated for appearance and defence.”

## *Response in the Merrimack Valley*

- Methuen and Haverhill appear to be the first two towns in Northern Essex County to take steps towards preparation for war.
- Approximately twenty days *before* the resolutions of the Massachusetts Provincial Congress, a Methuen Company of Militia declared:

“Whereas milartrary Exercise hath been much nelicked we the Subcrbers being the first comptrey in methuen Do Covenant and Engage To from our Bevels in to a Bodey in order to Lam the manual Exercise. To be Subegat To Such officers as the Comptrey shall chuse by Voat in all constutenel marsher according to our Chattaers . . . [list of sixty eight men] . . . the ferst Compyney in Methuen meat att Mr. Eben Carlton's in order To Chuse officers, and thay chose Lieut. Benj'm Hall Moder ator, they Chose Mr. James Jones for thar Capt. Mr. Ichobied Perkins furst Leut. Mr. James Wilson Sonent Leut. Mr. Sam Messer Ens. Mr. Nath Messer Jr. Clark for said Compyney.” (Resolution of the 1<sup>st</sup> Company of Militia, Methuen, October 6, 1774. )

- In Haverhill, the town took the extraordinary step of establishing an artillery company *six weeks* before the Massachusetts Provincial Congress passed its orders.

Haverhill Sept, 5th. 1774. We the Subscribers, sensible of the importance of a well regulated Military Discipline, do hereby covenant and engage, to form ourselves into an Artillery Company at Haverhill according to the following Articles, — First, That there shall be four officers (viz) a Capt, Lieut, Ensign and Sergeant, who is to act as Clerk, To be chosen by a majority of the Company when met together, 2d. That we will meet together (on the first and third Mondays of September, October and November following, and on the first and third Mondays of the six Summer months annually till the Company shall agree - to dissolve the same) for the exercise of Arms and Evolutions, And that the role shall be called two hours before Sunset, and the Company shall be dismissed at Sunset N. B. If it be fowl weather the Day appointed, the Company shall meet the next fair Day — 3dly. Any one neglecting Due attendance shall be subject to a fine of eight pence, for the use of the Company; unless on a reasonable Pica; excused by the Company, 4thly. That no new member be admitted without the vote of the Company, That each member shall be Equiped with Arms, Accoutriments and Dress, according to Vote of Company, 6thly. That each member shall be supply'd with one Pound of Powder and Twenty Balls ; to be reviewed twice a year ; upon the Days of a chusing Officers, to commence the first Monday in October, from that time, the first Monday in May and August annually. (Resolution of Captain James Brickett's Company, Haverhill, September 5, 1774. )

# Response in York County

- York County, by comparison, was slow to respond to the growing political crisis in the colony.
- Representatives from the County met in Wells on November 15 and 16, 1774 to address the growing threat of war with England.
- Unlike the towns in Essex County, the “York County Congress” elected to pursue a peaceful resolution.
- “Resolved, That this Congress recommend to every individual to use their influence for peace.”

# Preparation for War

- Following the instructions of the Provincial Congress, the various militia units from Andover, Methuen, Bradford, Boxford, Haverhill, Amesbury and Salisbury replaced loyalist Richard Saltonstall of Haverhill as regimental commander of the 4<sup>th</sup> Essex Regiment of Militia.
- Andover's Samuel Johnson was elected in his place. Recognizing how woefully ill prepared the various units under his command were, Johnson drafted and issued a circular letter to his men.
- "I therefore enjoin it upon the officers of my regiment that they see their orders punctually obeyed...In order hereunto, Military preparations are the only measures wherewith we may expect to meet our enemy with safety and success...I earnestly call upon all officers in my Regiment to exert themselves in their several places to cultivate a martial spirit and Disposition and to maintain their sincerity and activity therein by frequent mustering according as the Legislative Assembly has required."

- After Johnson issued his plea, the various towns began to debate the merits of establishing minute companies.
- Haverhill , Salisbury and Bradford moved first, establishing minute companies by the end of January, 1775.
- Recognizing other towns under his command were slow to react, Johnson personally addresses the militia companies of Andover, Boxford and Methuen.
- On February 2, 1775, Johnson speaks to the four companies of militia from the North and South Parishes of Andover. Following his address, two minute companies are formed under the command of Thomas Poor and Benjamin Ames.

- On February 14, 1775, Johnson visited Methuen. Following his speech, fifty men enlisted as minute men under the command of Captain John Davis.
- On February 22, 1775, Johnson visited Boxford. According to the *Essex Gazette*, the colonel “addressed himself with great zeal to the two foot-companies of the Fourth Regiment, recommending to them the necessity of enlisting themselves into the service of the Province, and in a short space of time fifty-three able-bodied and effective men willingly offered themselves to serve their Province in defence of their liberties.”
- Amesbury, one of the few towns not visited by Johnson, was the last to respond in the formation of a minute company. The town initially voted *not* to form a minute company. However, on March 20, 1775, the town finally “voted to raise fifty able bodied men including officers for minnit men and to enlist them for one year.”

Boxford, February 22, 1775.

Last Thursday, at two o'Clock, P. M. two Foot Companies of the 4th Regiment of Militia, in the County of Essex, Inhabitants of the Town of Boxford, being mustered, Col. Samuel Johnson, lately chose first Officer of said Regiment, addressed himself to said Companies, with great Zeal recommended to them the Necessity of insisting themselves into the Service of the Province, and in a short Space of Time 53 able-bodied and effective Men, being more than one quarter Part of said Companies, near one half of them Heads of Families, and Men of Substance, willingly offered themselves to serve their Province in Defence of their Liberties: They were then escorted into the House where they had assembled, and subscribed the Covenant that the other Companies of said Regiment had done, to serve in said Service for the Space of one Year, if not legally disbanded before: They then proceeded in the Choice of Officers, and chose Ensign William Perley for their Captain, Lieut. John Robinson for their 1st Lieutenant, and Serjeant Benjamin Perley for the 2d Lieutenant; also 4 Serjeants for said Company: The Muster-Master of said Regiment being present, each Officer and Soldier passed before said Muster-Master, and received his Assent, that they were all fit for the above said Service; all being done with Unanimity and good Resolution in the Cause of Freedom, which every American ought to be united in, and strive for, to the latest Generation.

- Less than a month after the York County declaration of resolution through peaceful means, many towns in York County recognized war was inevitable. Although slow to create minute companies, York County did take steps to prepare for war.
- On December 22, 1774, Biddeford voted “to form a magazine for their own defense.”
- The town also “Resolved That ... a committee to provide a town stock of six half barrels of powder, lead, and a sufficiency of flints, according to the number of persons in the train-band and alarm-list in said town ; four barrels of which powder, and the whole of the lead and flints are to be kept entire until the town shall otherwise order, or it shall become necessary to deliver the same to the said persons in the train-hand or alarm-list.”
- In early 1775, the Town of York ordered a “military watch to be kept at night at the mouth of the town harbor.”

- By December, 1774, Arundel had reorganized its militia and split it into two companies. The companies were commanded by Jonathan Stone and Benjamin Durrell.
- Wells resolved “the towns to furnish themselves with all the armaments which were accessible, and to have the militia suitably instructed in the art military to meet the demands of impending war.”
- Pepperellborough (Saco) resolved in March, 1775, “to divide the Militia Company of the District into four separate squadrons, to exercise half a day and once in every week for three months to come, and to begin their exercises at two o'clock in the afternoon, and to have a teacher to learn them the military art.”

# Pay and Reimbursement

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

- Haverhill established that its minute men “be allowed for each half day, eight pence till ye middle of March next, and one shilling for each half day afterwards, until they are called out to actual service from home, or disbanded. That when they are called to leave home on actual service they shall Receive ye same wages & subsistence as Soldiers received the last war. That if they are called upon & do actually march from home in defence of the Province, they shall be intitled to receive three dollars each as a Bounty, either from the Town or Province. Further that the three chief officers recieve for each half Day two Shillings Each till ye middle of March next, & after that time three shillings each half Day till called upon to march from home, or are disbanded.”

- Andover resolved that its minutemen would receive “eight pence for each half day they shall be exercised in the art of military . . . and from 30th day of March to the 30th Day of September . . . one shilling for each half day they shall be exercised . . . and in the case each soldier shall be called to active service, thirty six shillings per month.”
- Methuen simply established a pay scale of eight pence per day dedicated to drilling.

# Weapons, Equipment and Uniforms

Despite popular modern misconceptions, Massachusetts minutemen were not poorly armed and equipped. Instead it appears most towns, including the Merrimack Valley and York County regions, took appropriate steps to ensure its minute companies were well supplied for war.

# Kittery and York

- Captain Samuel Darby's Company (York, ME): All men supplied themselves with firearms and equipment.
- Captain Jonathan Nowell's Company (York, ME): Total, 50 men. All had guns, but 34 furnished their own, and 19 had cartridge boxes.
- Captain Samuel Leighton's Company (Kittery, York and Berwick, ME): nearly all cartridge boxes. Only eight men had bayonets
- Captain Tobias Fernald's Company (Kittery, ME): All men equipped with guns and cartridge boxes. Only six had bayonets, which were supplied by the soldiers themselves.

# Wells and The Berwicks

- Captain Sameul Sawyer's Company (Wells, ME): All 66 men had cartridge boxes.
- Captain Joshua Bragdon's Company (Wells, ME): 57 men, all but two provided their own firelocks. 39 had bayonets.
- Captain Phillip Hubbard's Company (South Berwick, ME): Only 24 men had cartridge boxes and no bayonets in the ranks.
- Captain Ebenezer Sullivan's Company (Berwick, ME): The muster roll has a return of 64 men. Of the 64, 36 had cartridge boxes.

## Biddeford and Arundel

- Captain Jeremiah Hill's Company (Biddeford, ME): Total of 60 men, 44 had cartridges (boxes).
- Captain Jesse Dorman's Company (Arundel, ME): Total, 60 men. 55 had guns, 7 owned bayonets which they furnished themselves, and 49 had cartridge boxes.

# Bradford

- In Bradford, the residents voted to ensure its minute men were uniformly armed with bayonets and cartridge boxes: “Voted, That the Selectmen provide bayonets and cartouch boxes for the Minute-Men on the town cost, to be returned to the town after they are dismissed from the service.”
- Later that year (1775), four Bradford men were reimbursed for fitting bayonets to guns, making cartridge boxes and making scabbards and belting for the town’s minute company. “Voted, To Phineas Carlton, for 22 Bayonets fitted with Scabbards and Belts, 8l. 5s. 0d. Voted, To Phineas Carlton, for Scowering the old Bayonets, and fitting with Belts, 4l. 4s. 0d. For 2 Scabbards and Belts, 0l. 3s. 0d. Wm. Greenough, for fitting one Bayonet and one belt, 0l. 2s. 8d . . . To Phineas Cole for Leathering 50 Cartridge boxes, 6l. 13s. 4d.”

# Andover

- Andover placed a heavy emphasis in arming its two minute companies with bayonets.
- “Voted, that the enlisted soldiers be furnished with bayonets at the expense of the town. Voted, that a committee be chosen to collect the bayonets now in the hands of individuals in this Town and provide such a number of new ones as will be sufficient to supply the minute men. Voted, that the Committee chosen at the last meeting to procure bayonets collect as many as they can of those belonging to the Province by next Wednesday, two o'clock, P. M., that they procure one hundred more to be made as soon as possible and supply those firelocks that are effective which belong to the minute men with good bayonets as soon as may be.”



# Methuen

- Methuen resolved to provide bayonets “which should be brought to Capt. John Davis and after the service was over said Davis is to return said bayonets unto the Selectmen of said town.”
- The town also voted to provide guns for all minute men unable to supply their own, blankets and cartridges

## Amesbury and Boxford

- Amesbury voted that its minute men would be responsible for their own arms and equipment. “Voted that said Minnit men shall upon their own cost be well equipped with arms and aminition according to law fit for a march.”
- Boxford merely issued a vague resolution that its minutemen be “arm, equip, and hold themselves in readiness to march in any emergency in defence of the Province.”

## *Remember That Haverhill Artillery Company?*

- Captain James Brickett's Company was unable to procure an artillery piece. As a result, they began to refer to themselves as an "independent corps". On the eve of the American Revolution, Brickett's Company was essentially operating as a minute company.
- On March 21, 1775, Brickett's Company voted to adopt equipment and *uniform guidelines* for the company!!

“Voted that we Dress in a Uniform consisting of a Blue Coat, turned up with Buff, and yellow plain Buttons, the Coat cut half way the thigh; and the Pockets a Slope. Voted, Also, that we have Buff, or Nankeen Waistcoat & Breeches, and White Stockings with half Boots or Gaiters. Also that the Hats be cocked alike. And that each one have a bright gun, Bayonet, & Steel Ramrod. Voted that the Company be equipd in this Uniform by the first Monday in May. . . [that] each member shall be supply'd with one Pound of Powder and Twenty Balls; to be reviewed twice a year; upon the Days of a chusing.”









# Drilling

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

Pepperellborough (Saco) voted in March, 1775 “to divide the Militia Company of the District into four separate squadrons, to exercise half a day and once in every week for three months to come, and to begin their exercises at two o'clock in the afternoon, and to have a teacher to learn them the military art, and said teacher to be paid out of the District Treasury ; one part to be paid at the Old Orchard, so called ; another, to be from Rumery's to the lower ferry ; another, from said Rumery's up to the head of said District (or town) ; and the other part at Dunstown, so called.”



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

- Meanwhile, Haverhill's "Independent Corps" commanded by Captain Brickett passed their own resolutions regarding preparations for war. "That we will meet together (on the first and third Mondays of September, October and November following, and on the first and third Mondays of the six Summer months annually till the Company shall agree - to dissolve the same) for the exercise of Arms and Evolutions, And that the role shall be called two hours before Sunset, and the Company shall be dismissed at Sunset N. B. If it be fowl weather tho Day appointed, the Company shall meet the next fair Day."
- Shortly thereafter, the men voted to adopt "the exercise as ordered by His Majesty in the year 1764."
- Two months later, Brickett's "independent corps" voted "that we hire Mr George Marsdin for 4 days at 12s a day, & that he be paid out of the fines."

## *Who is George Marsden?*

- George Marsden was a grenadier from the 59th Regiment of Foot.
- He deserted from Boston on 24 July 1774, according to that regiment's muster rolls.
- Afterwards, he fled to the Haverhill area. Haverhill, historically, was very friendly towards British deserters.

**W**HEREAS, JAMES DARNLEY and THOMAS SHERWOOD, Deserters from his Majesty's 14th. Regiment of Foot were lately apprehended, by a party from said Regiment, at Londonderry, in the province of New-Hampshire, and afterwards rescued by a number of armed men, near Klaverhill; The commanding officer of said Regiment, at Boston, hereby offers, a reward of TWO GUINEAS, for each of said Deserters, to any person who shall apprehend and secure them, till they can be sent for by the Regiment.

*DESCRIPTION.*

**James Darnley,**

About 29 Years of Age, 5 feet 8 and a Half inches high, born in the Parish of Glossop in the county of Derby, (England) by Trade a Saw-maker, brown complexion, oval visage, gray eyes, dark brown hair, a cut on the inside of the left hand, strong made.

**Thomas Sherwood,**

About 33 years of Age, 5 feet 6 inches high, born in the Parish of Stoke upon Trent, in the county of Stafford, (England) by Trade a Potter, brown complexion, round visage, hazle eyes, brown hair, strong made.

- As Massachusetts prepared for war, Marsden was hired by Andover, Bradford and Haverhill to train and drill their minute companies. Afterwards, he was hired by York, Wells and Pepperellborough.
- In short, a former British soldier was training some of the minute companies from the Merrimack Valley and York County!!!

# Joint Drills?

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

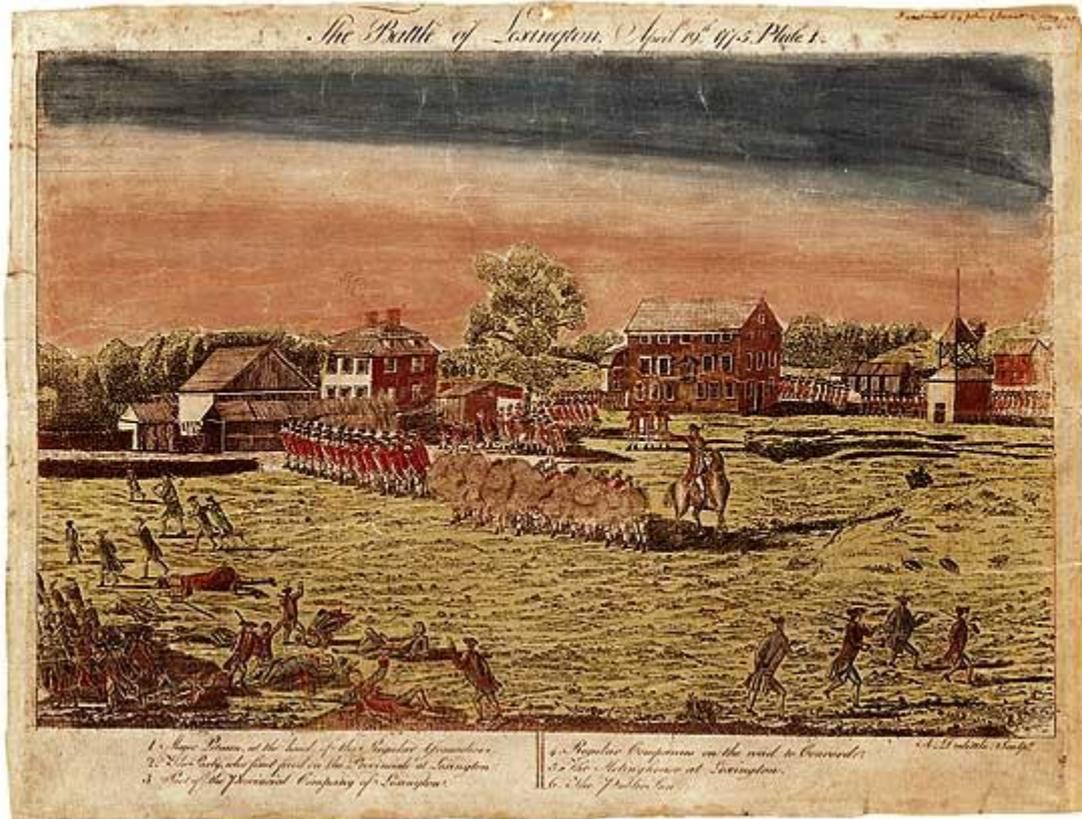
NEWBURY-PORT; March 1.

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

N A V E R H I L L, April 17.

Yesterday, at about half after eleven o'Clock, the Town was alarmed, while in public Worship, with the Cry of Fire, which began in a Barn near the House of Samuel White, Esq; (occasioned by the burning of a Chimney) and notwithstanding the utmost Efforts that could be made with a Fire Engine, and otherwise, the Dwelling-House of the said White, Capt. Greenleaf's Tavern, and Mr. Dodge's Store, (the Property of Mr. John White) Mr. Duncan's Still-House and Store, Mr. McHard's Store, and Mr. Dudley Ladd's House and Shop, were entirely destroyed, with many Barns and other Buildings; and the Wind being high at S. S. W. endangered a great Part of the Town; the Meeting-House, Parsonage-House, and many other Houses and Buildings, having been on Fire. But by the Vigilance of the People, with the Engine, they prevented the burning of Mr. Osgood's House and many other Houses on the other Side of the Way, otherwise all the best Part of the Town would have been consumed. The Household and Shop Goods were mostly saved. The Loss to the Sufferers is computed at more than £.2000 Sterling.

April 19, 1775



## Account of Lieutenant Benjamin Farnum of Andover

“April 19, 1775. This day, the Mittel men of Colonel Frye's regiment were Alarmed with the Nuse of the Troops marching from Boston to Concord, at which Nuse they marched very quick from Andover, and marched within about 5 miles of Concord, then meeting with the Nuse of their retreat for Boston again with which Nuse we turned our corse in order to catch them. We retreated that Day to Notme [Menotomy] but we could not come up with them. The nit coming on, we stopped; the next day we marched to Cambridge.”

# Account of Thomas Boynton of Andover

“Andover, April 19, 1775. This morning, being Wednesday, about the sun's rising the town was alarmed with the news that the Regulars was on their march to Concord. Upon which the town mustered and about 10 o'clock marched onward for Concord. In Tewksbury news came that the Regulars had fired on our men in Lexington, and had killed 8. In Bilricke news came that the enemy were killing and slaying our men in Concord. Bedford we had the news that the enemy had killed 2 of our men and had retreated back; we shifted our course and persued after them as fast as possible, but all in vain ; the enemy had the start 3 or 4 miles. It is said that their number was about 1500 men. They were persued as far as Charlestown that night; the next day they passed Charles River. The loss they sustained as we hear were 500; our men about 40. **To return, after we came into Concord road we saw houses burning and others plundered and dead bodies of the enemy lying by the way, others taken prisoners.** About eight at night our regiment came to a halt in no time. The next morning we came into Cambridge and there abode.”

## Account of James Stevens of Andover

“April ye 19 1775 this morning about seven a'clock we had alarum that the Reegerlers was gon to Conkord we getherd to the meting hous & then started for Concord we went throu Tukesbary & in to Bilrica we stopt to Polords & eat some bisket & Ches on the comon. we started & wen into Bedford & we herd that the reegerlers was gon back to Boston **we went through Bedford, we went in to Lecentown. We went to the metinghous & there we come to the distraction of the Reegerlers thay cild eight of our men & shot a Canon Ball throug the metin hous. we went a long throug Lecintown & we saw severel reegerlers ded on the rod & som of our men & three or fore houses was Burnt & som hoses & hogs was cild thay plainered in every hous thay could git in to thay stove in windows & broke in tops of desks** we met the men a coming back very fast we went through Notemy & got into Cambridg we stopt about eight a'clocke for thay say that the reegerlers was got to Chalstown on to Bunkers hil & intrenstion we stopt about two miles back from the college.”

# Amesbury: Orders to March to War

Open to John Currier Capt of a military foot  
Company in Amesbury This Day I have received intelligence  
that the ministerial troops under the Command  
and of General Gage did last evening march out  
of Boston and marched to Lexington & there killed  
a Number of our American Soldiers & then  
proceed to Concord killing and Destroying our men  
and interest. There are therefore to order you forth  
with to rally and muster as many of your under  
officers and Soldiers as you can possibly to meet imme-  
diately to some suitable place and then to march  
forthwith to Concord or Esse where as in your Discre-  
tion you shall think best to the relief of our Town  
and Country and also to order those who are now  
absent & out of the way to Follow after and join you  
as soon as they shall be apprized of the Alarm

“Essex Co To John Currier Capt of a militerry foot Company in Amesbury this Day I have received intilgence that the ministeriel troops under the Command of General Gage did Last evening march out of Boston and marched to Lexington & there Killed a Number of our American Soldiers & thence proceed to Concord Killing and Destroying our men and interest: These are therefore to order you forthwith to Notify and muster as many of your under officers and Soldiers as you can possible to meet immediatly to Some Suitable place: and then to march of forthwith to Concord or Else where as in your Descretion you Shall think best to the reliefe of our Friend[s] and Country: and also to order those who are now absent & out of the way to Follow after and ioin you as Soon as they shall be apprized of the Alaram and when you have marched your men to Some part of our army you are to appoint some officer to head them in case you return home your Self: till Some Further order may be taken: in this Faile Not Given under my Hand and Seal at Amesbury this Ninteenth Day of April in the Fifteenth year of the Reign of George the third Anno Domini: 1775. Isaac Merrill.”

## Meanwhile in York County...

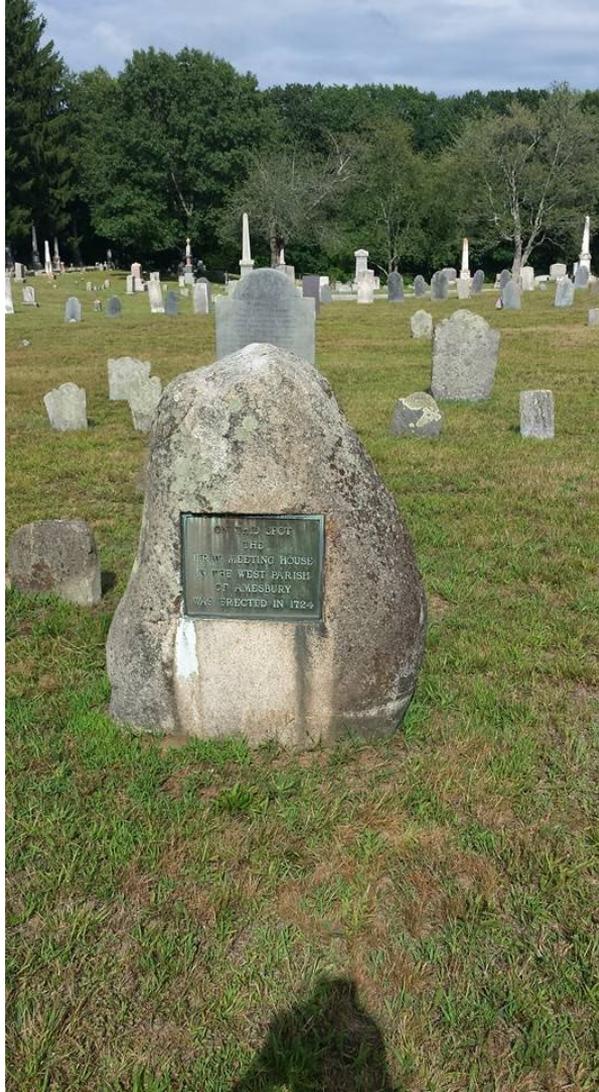
- The Town of York received word of the Battle of Lexington the evening of April 19, 1775. The next day its minute and militia companies mobilized and crossed into New Hampshire via a Portsmouth ferry. A period account described the York men as being equipped with “arms and ammunition and knapsacks full of provisions.”
- According to the Reverend Isaac Hasey, the Lebanon (Maine) minute company received word on April 20th and mobilized for war the next day. “Apr. 20th. — Squally. Good news this morn 4 of clock, a.m. ; news of y. regulars fighting.” Apr. "21st — Clear and windy; rod to Berwick and returned. Muster day to send off ye minute men.”

# Aftermath

- It appears many of the Merrimack Valley minute companies under the command of Colonel Frye remained outside of Boston for approximately one week. Many units from Maine, under the command of Colonel Scammon, never arrived as they turned back in Portsmouth.
- Many Maine men expressed concern that their coastal towns would be easy targets for raids by the British Navy.
- In mid-May, many of the men returned to the Siege of Boston in a newly formed Massachusetts regiments under the command of Colonels Frye and Scammon.
- Although the men did not see combat on April 19, 1775, they would play a vital role in the Battle of Chelsea Creek (May 27/28, 1775) and the Battle of Bunker Hill.

THE TOWN of FALMOUTH, *Burnt, by Captain. MOET,* Oct<sup>r</sup> 18<sup>th</sup> 1775.





ON THE SPOT  
WHERE  
THE  
FIRST MEETING HOUSE  
IN THE WEST PARISH  
OF AMESBURY  
WAS ERECTED IN 1724





Questions?





# Thanks!

Contact me:

Alex Cain  
85 Church Street  
Merrimac, MA 01860

978-891-2785

[McAlpin77@gmail.com](mailto:McAlpin77@gmail.com)



*John Collins Photography*