

Rolling Toward Revolution... APRIL 1775



In Boston: The port of Boston had been closed for more than 10 months. Military Governor, General Thomas Gage's spies reported that powder and arms were being stored in Concord and rebel leaders Sam Adams and John Hancock were based at Lexington. He plans an early morning raid with 700 soldiers crossing the Charles River in the darkness. On the night of April 18, by prearrangement, two signal lanterns in the tower of Boston's North Church send Sons of Liberty, Paul Revere, Will Dawes, and Sam Prescott, on an urgent late-night ride from Charlestown through the Middlesex countryside. The British are on the move.

In Middlesex County, Massachusetts. On the morning of April 19, the large British force reaches and overwhelms some 80 militia in Lexington village. Someone fires a shot, unclear who. The British respond with a volley. Men on both sides fall. The militia scatter and the British move on to Concord. At nearby Concord, Minuteman Nathaniel Page thought to bring his old militia flag to the bridge as they re-assembled to face the enemy. Unknown to him, its motto echoes Patrick Henry. 'CONQUER OR DIE' it read and becomes the first battle flag. As militia ranks swelled with reinforcements, British Col. Francis Smith decides to retreat to Boston but the column is harassed *en route*. The British suffer many more losses than the militia.

In New Jersey: On April 5, Governor William Franklin announces Hillsborough's royal charter, the last granted by the King to any colonial institution. Franklin continues to meet with his Council to deal with routine items. He makes no plan to see his father, recently returned to Philadelphia after years abroad in London. The elder Franklin has been tapped to serve as a Pennsylvania delegate to the Second Continental Congress set to convene in Philadelphia on May 10.

On April 22, news of the actions at Lexington and Concord reach Hendrick Fisher who calls for a meeting of the Committee of Correspondence in Trenton in May 22. On April 26 another rider brings news that British troops at Boston have been reinforced and that militiamen are surrounding Boston and digging trenches. Benjamin Rush's 'Winter of Uncommon Anxiety' was over. Spring had come and so had Revolution.

Sources

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