

**LEXINGTON, THE
BIRTHPLACE OF
AMERICAN
LIBERTY: A HANDBOOK**

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Lexington, the Birthplace of American Liberty: A Handbook by Fred S. Piper

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FRED S. PIPER

**LEXINGTON, THE
BIRTHPLACE OF
AMERICAN
LIBERTY: A HANDBOOK**



HAYES MEMORIAL FOUNTAIN AND STATUE OF CAPTAIN JOHN PARKER,
LEXINGTON COMMON,

LEXINGTON

THE

BIRTHPLACE OF AMERICAN LIBERTY

A HANDBOOK

CONTAINING

AN ACCOUNT OF THE BATTLE OF LEXINGTON — PAUL REVERE'S
NARRATIVE OF HIS FAMOUS RIDE — A SKETCH OF THE TOWN
AND THE PLACES OF HISTORIC INTEREST — INSCRIPTIONS
ON ALL HISTORIC TABLETS — DIRECTORY
— MAP AND NUMEROUS ILLUSTRATIONS

By FRED S. PIPER,
CUSTODIAN OF THE LEXINGTON HISTORICAL SOCIETY.

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THE OLD MONUMENT ON THE COMMON.

SACRED TO THE LIBERTY AND THE RIGHTS OF MANKIND!!!
TO THE FREEDOM AND INDEPENDENCE OF AMERICA,
SEALED AND DEFENDED WITH THE BLOOD OF HER SONS.

THIS MONUMENT IS ERECTED
BY THE INHABITANTS OF LEXINGTON,
UNDER THE PATRONAGE AND AT THE EXPENSE OF
THE COMMONWEALTH OF MASSACHUSETTS,
TO THE MEMORY OF THEIR FELLOW CITIZENS,
ENSGN ROBERT MUNROE AND MESSRS. JONAS PARKER,
SAMUEL HADLEY, JONATHAN HARRINGTON, JR.,
ISAAC MUZZY, CALEB HARRINGTON AND JOHN BROWN
OF LEXINGTON, AND ASAHEL PORTER OF WOBURN,
WHO FELL ON THIS FIELD, THE FIRST VICTIMS TO THE
SWORD OF BRITISH TYRANNY AND OPPRESSION,
ON THE MORNING OF THE EVER MEMORABLE
NINETEENTH OF APRIL, AN. DOM. 1775,
THEY DIE WAS CAST!!!

THE BLOOD OF THESE MARTYRS
IN THE CAUSE OF GOD AND THEIR COUNTRY
WAS THE CEMENT OF THE UNION OF THESE STATES, THEN
COLONIES, AND GAVE THE SPRING TO THE SPIRIT, FIRMNES
AND RESOLUTION OF THEIR FELLOW CITIZENS.
THEY ROSE AS ONE MAN TO REVENGE THEIR BRETHREN'S
BLOOD, AND AT THE POINT OF THE SWORD, TO ASSERT AND
DEFEND THEIR NATIVE RIGHTS.

THEY NOBLY DAR'D TO BE FREE!!
THE CONTEST WAS LONG, BLOODY AND AFFECTING.
RIGHTEOUS HEAVEN APPROVED THE SOLEMN APPEAL,
VICTORY CROWNED THEIR ARMS; AND
THE PEACE, LIBERTY, AND INDEPENDENCE OF THE UNITED
STATES OF AMERICA WAS THEIR GLORIOUS REWARD.

BUILT IN THE YEAR 1799.



MUNROE TAVERN.



IT WAS in the gray dawn of that April morning 1775 — "A glorious morning for America" — when the royal troops reached Lexington Common.

They had heard the drum beat of the minute men, and advanced on "double-quick" with loaded muskets.

About seventy minute men, brave defenders of their rights, had assembled to meet six hundred trained soldiers. "Too few to resist, too brave to fly," they did the best they could, and after years of conflict here begun, American liberty was born. The colonists had long contended against British oppression. James Otis resigned his office as the King's advocate



STONE CANNON.

and defended the rights of Bostonians,—the first step in the revolution. The stamp act had been passed and repealed. Patrick Henry had spoken out boldly in Virginia.

The first Continental Congress met September 5, 1774. The Provincial Congress assembled one month later, assumed the government of the colony, except in Boston where the British troops were stationed, took measures to

organize militia companies and to prepare for resistance by force if necessary. Executive power was placed in the hands of the Committee of Safety, prominent members of which were Dr. Joseph Warren and John Hancock.

A close watch was kept over the movements of the British soldiers. The King had entrusted the government of Massachusetts to Gen. Gage, the commander of the British army in America. He was a man of weak character, and his petty and injudicious acts aggravated the inhabitants.

Large quantities of military supplies had been collected at Salem and Concord. Gage's attempt to take the stores at Salem, Feb. 26, 1775, resulted in a ridiculous failure. In March it was reported that he intended to capture or destroy the stores at Concord, which, from this time on, were carefully guarded.

The Provincial Congress, which had been in session in Concord adjourned April 15.

The Committee of Safety adjourned at Concord April 17, and Samuel Adams and John Hancock, arch traitors in the estimation of the Royal government, then became the guests of Rev. Jonas Clarke, pastor at Lexington. Gen. Gage kept his plans secret, and it is interesting to conjecture the part played by his wife who was the daughter of a New Jersey patriot.

Gordon, who was chaplain of the Provincial Congress, says in

his "History of the Independence of the United States": "A daughter of liberty sent word by a trusty hand to Mr. Samuel Adams, residing in company with Mr. Hancock about thirteen miles from Charlestown, that the troops were coming out in a few days—." Several historical writers seem to confirm the belief that this "Daughter of Liberty" was the wife of Gen. Gage, and that she gave Dr. Warren valuable information, which was sent by the "trusty hand" of Paul Revere, and William Dawes as well, to Adams and Hancock at Lexington.

Relative to what followed, what can be more interesting or authentic than Paul Revere's own written narrative?

The Saturday night preceding the 10th of April, about twelve o'clock at night, the boats belonging to the transports were all launched, and carried under the sterns of the men-of-war. (They had been previously hauled up and repaired). We likewise found that the grenadiers and light infantry were all taken off duty.

From these movements, we expected something serious was to be transacted. On Tuesday evening, the 13th, it was observed that a number of soldiers were marching towards the bottom of the Common. About ten o'clock, Dr. Warren sent in great haste for me, and begged that I would immediately set off for Lexington, where Messrs. Hancock and Adams were, and acquaint them of the movement, and that it was thought they were the objects. When I got to Dr. Warren's house, I found he had sent an express by land to Lexington,—a Mr. William Dawes. The Sunday before, by desire of Dr. Warren, I had been to Lexington, to Messrs. Hancock and Adams, who were at the Rev. Mr. Clark's. I returned at night through Charlestown; there I agreed with a Colonel Conant and some other gentlemen, that if the British went out by water, we would show two lanterns in the North Church steeple; and 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. I left Dr. Warren, called upon a friend, and desired him to make the signals. I then went home, took my boots and surtout, went to the north part of the town, where I kept a boat; two friends rowed me across Charles River a little to the eastward where the Somerset man-of-war lay. It was then young flood, the ship was winding, and the moon was rising.

They landed me on the Charlestown side. When I got into town, I met Colonel Conant and several others; they said they had seen our signals. I told them what was acting, and went to get me a horse; I got a horse of Deacon Larkin. While the horse was preparing, Richard Devens, Esq., who



SILHOUETTE OF
REV. JONAS CLARKE.



PORTRAIT BY STUART.

and enquired for Mr. Dawes; they said he had not been there; I related the story of the two officers, and supposed that he must have been stopped, as he ought to have been there before me. After I had been there about half an hour, Mr. Dawes came; we refreshed ourselves, and set off for Concord, to secure the stores, etc., there. We were overtaken by a young Dr. Prescott, whom we found to be a high Son of Liberty. I told them of the ten officers that Mr. Devens met, and that it was probable we might be stopped before we got to Concord; for I supposed that after night, they divided themselves, and that two of them had fixed themselves in such passages as were most likely to stop any intelligence going to Concord. I likewise mentioned that we had better alarm all the inhabitants till we got to Concord; the young Doctor much approved of it, and said he would stop with either of us, for the people between that and Concord knew him, and would give the more credit to what we said. We had got nearly half way: Mr. Dawes and the Doctor stopped to alarm the people of a house; I was about one hundred rods ahead, when I saw two men, in nearly the same situation as those officers were, near Charlestown. I called for the Doctor and Mr. Dawes to come up; in an instant I was surrounded by four:—they had placed themselves in a straight road, that inclined each way; they had taken down a pair of bars on the north side of the road, and two of them were under a tree in the pasture. The Doctor being foremost, he came up; and we tried to get past them: but they being armed with pistols and swords, they forced us into the pasture; the Doctor jumped

was one of the Committee of Safety came to me, and told me that he came down the road from Lexington, after sundown, that evening; that he met ten British officers, all well mounted and armed, going up the road.

I set off upon a very good horse; it was then about eleven o'clock, and very pleasant. After I had passed Charlestown Neck, and got nearly opposite where Mark was hung in chains, I saw two men on horseback under a tree. When I got near them, I discovered they were British officers. One tried to get ahead of me, and the other to take me. I turned my horse very quick, and galloped towards Charlestown Neck, and then pushed for the Medford road. The one who chased me, endeavoring to cut me off, got into a clay pond, near where the new tavern is now built. I got clear of him, and went through Medford, over the bridge, and up to Menotomy. In Medford, I awaked the Captain of the Minute Men; and after that, I alarmed almost every house, till I got to Lexington.

I found Messrs. Hancock and Adams at the Rev. Mr. Clark's; I told them my errand, and the Rev. Mr. Clark's; I told them my errand, and related the story of the two officers, and supposed that he must have been stopped, as he ought to have been there before me. After I had been there about half an hour, Mr. Dawes came; we refreshed ourselves, and set off for Concord, to secure the stores, etc., there. We were overtaken by a young Dr. Prescott, whom we found to be a high Son of Liberty. I told them of the ten officers that Mr. Devens met, and that it was probable we might be stopped before we got to Concord; for I supposed that after night, they divided themselves, and that two of them had fixed themselves in such passages as were most likely to stop any intelligence going to Concord. I likewise mentioned that we had better alarm all the inhabitants till we got to Concord; the young Doctor much approved of it, and said he would stop with either of us, for the people between that and Concord knew him, and would give the more credit to what we said. We had got nearly half way: Mr. Dawes and the Doctor stopped to alarm the people of a house; I was about one hundred rods ahead, when I saw two men, in nearly the same situation as those officers were, near Charlestown. I called for the Doctor and Mr. Dawes to come up; in an instant I was surrounded by four:—they had placed themselves in a straight road, that inclined each way; they had taken down a pair of bars on the north side of the road, and two of them were under a tree in the pasture. The Doctor being foremost, he came up; and we tried to get past them: but they being armed with pistols and swords, they forced us into the pasture; the Doctor jumped