

THE SHOT HEARD 'ROUND THE WORLD

April 19th marks a significant date in the founding of our nation — The beginning of the Revolutionary War when British soldiers fired on American Patriots at Lexington and Concord on April 19, 1775.

"Hardly a man is now alive who remembers that famous day and year," wrote Henry Wadsworth Longfellow in a poem that begins: *"Listen, my children, and you shall hear of the midnight ride of Paul Revere."* (Photo of Paul Revere statue in Boston)



During the evening of April 18, silversmith Paul Revere and tanner William Dawes raced to Lexington to warn Samuel Adams and John Hancock that the British Regulars were coming to arrest them and to alert everyone that there may be trouble.

Joined by physician Dr. Samuel Prescott upon leaving Lexington, the three men rode quickly to tell the citizens of Concord that British soldiers were coming to seize their stores of munitions. A British patrol stopped them and captured Revere. Dawes' horse threw him to the ground, but Prescott escaped and galloped on to Concord.



Early in the morning of April 19, Major John Pitcairn's 700 redcoats challenged Captain John Parker's Patriot militia drawn-up on the Lexington Village Green. "Stand your ground," Parker said to his apprehensive troops. "Don't fire unless fired upon, but if they mean to have a war, let it begin here." No one knows who fired the first shot, but resistance to the larger British force proved futile and eight Patriots were killed. (Photo of Captain John Parker's statue on the Lexington Village Green)

The British marched on to Concord, sure that the militia there could be as easily defeated. But Prescott had arrived with his warning, and more than 400 men lay in wait at Concord's North Bridge. During the fighting, the Patriots repulsed the British, who then began their long return to Boston. (Photo of Minuteman's statue at the Old North Bridge in Concord)

"By the rude bridge that arched the flood, their flag to April's breeze unfurled, here once the embattled farmers stood, and fired the shot heard 'round the world," wrote Ralph Waldo Emerson in his *Concord Hymn*.



The British retreat became a humiliating rout as the Patriots harassed them from behind stones, walls and trees, every step of the way. By the time the British reached Boston, the Patriots had killed or wounded 273 redcoats; the Patriots had lost 103 men, and the Revolutionary War had begun.

News of the Battles at Lexington and Concord galvanized public opinion in favor of the American Revolution throughout the colonies, including reluctant Georgians. The following year on July 4, 1776, the Continental Congress declared Independence, a date now celebrated as our National Holiday.

The shot heard 'round the world began a long and difficult fight that resulted in the creation of "one nation under God, with liberty and justice for all." An objective of the Daughters and Sons of the American Revolution is to remind our fellow citizens of the significant sacrifices made by these Patriots. The Patriots stopped the redcoats on April 19, 1775 — Let's Celebrate Patriots Day on the 19th day of April.

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