



TallShipTuesdays

Historical Context

Once he reached Lexington, Paul Revere—together with fellow rider William Dawes; patriots Samuel Adams, John Hancock, and Jonas Clarke; and members of the Lexington militia—decided that Concord must be alerted as well. The British soldiers, called regulars, wouldn't stop in Lexington. They were after the food, ammunition, and other supplies the militias had stockpiled. Although Revere had warned the citizens of Concord ten days earlier that such an expedition was coming, he and Dawes rode off again to say that this was the night. Other riders, too, such as Samuel Prescott, helped spread the news that the British regulars were coming. Bells tolled. **Minutemen and militiamen** in scattered villages grabbed their muskets.

In Lexington, the militiamen were waiting at the Buckman Tavern on the village green. When the British arrived, militia leader Captain John Parker saw that his men were greatly outnumbered—approximately 850 British regulars against about 75 Lexington militiamen. He ordered his men to disperse. Then a shot rang out. More shots followed. In the end, eight militiamen lay dead, and nine were wounded. The British continued their march to Concord. These things would be different.

According to Lemuel Shattuck's *History of the Town of Concord* (1835), a young girl named Hannah Barns played a small but significant role in the events of the day when she stood up to British soldiers at Ephraim Jones's tavern. The Hannah in their story is based on Shattuck's account. So is the scene where British troops point their bayonets at tavern keeper Jones. But the author, not history, places Henry Gardner in the tavern during the early-morning hours of April 19.

Vocabulary

- **Minutemen and Militiamen:** Citizen soldiers who trained to defend their villages and farms from any enemy. Service in the **militia** was a long tradition in New England, and most towns had a militia made up of all able-bodied men between the ages of 16 and 50. In 1774, with trouble brewing with Britain, the Provincial Congress suggested that some militiamen be organized into "**minute companies**" that could be ready to march on a minute's notice. These minutemen usually trained more often and more vigorously than other militiamen. Many towns had both a standing militia and minutemen.

Resource – the historical context comes from the short story "Just Like a Minuteman" by Elizabeth Weiss Vollstadt in the book, *Young Patriots: Inspiring Stories of the American Revolution*, by Marcella Anderson & Elizabeth Vollstadt. The story is read by Capt. Jones in the #TallShipTuesdays video, "Just Like a Minuteman."

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