Lesson 5

Toward Independence

Why was there an American Revolution?

Introduction

An almost full moon cast a pale light over Boston on April 18, 1775. But the night was anything but quiet. Mounted on a fast horse named Brown Beauty, Paul Revere woke up the countryside with the alarming news that British troops, stationed in Boston, had orders to march to the nearby town of Concord and seize weapons the colonists had stored there!

This was news Patriots had been waiting for. Patriots (also called Whigs) were Americans who believed the colonies had the right to govern themselves. On hearing Revere’s warning, Patriots around Concord grabbed their muskets and prepared to meet the advancing British troops.

The same news filled Loyalists (also called Tories) with dread. Loyalists were colonists who felt a deep loyalty to Great Britain. They saw themselves as faithful subjects of the king and were horrified by the idea of taking up arms against British troops. How did colonists come to be so divided in their feelings about the British? Most Americans were content with British rule in the early 1700s. However, this relationship between Great Britain and the colonies would quickly begin to change.

In the 1750s, Great Britain and the colonies fought a war against the French and their Indian allies that left Great Britain with huge debts and a vast new empire to protect. To solve these problems, the British government passed new laws that tightened its control of the colonies. Some of these laws also placed new taxes on the colonists.

Colonists were stunned when Great Britain suddenly changed the rules. For the most part, they had been able to make their own laws and determine their own taxes. Now angry colonists protested. In this lesson, you will see how these feelings led many colonists to consider rebelling against their government.

By the 1770s, the colonists had become deeply divided in their loyalty to Great Britain. Here, some colonists tear down a statue of King George.
1. Before 1763
By 1750, the American colonies were bursting with growth. In just a century, the population of the colonies had grown from 50,000 to more than a million people. What brought about this rapid growth? Cheap land? Religious tolerance? Economic opportunity? While all of these were important in attracting people to the colonies, there was another important reason.

For more than a century, the British government had, for the most part, left the colonies alone to solve their own problems. During this time, Americans in each colony had learned to govern themselves by electing their own assemblies. Like the British Parliament, the assemblies had the power to pass laws and to create and collect taxes. Each assembly also decided how the colony’s tax money should be spent. Americans had more freedom to run their own affairs than ordinary people in any country in Europe. Self-government also made the colonies attractive to settlers.

Conflict in the Ohio Valley  As the colonies grew, settlers began to dream of moving across the Appalachian Mountains and into the Ohio Valley—the region between the Ohio and Mississippi rivers. Both Great Britain and France claimed this area. In 1754, the French honored their claim by building Fort Duquesne (du-KANE) where the city of Pittsburgh stands today.

News of the fort alarmed the governor of Virginia. He ordered a small force of Virginia militia, or a small army of citizens trained to fight in an emergency, to drive the French out of the Ohio Valley. The head of the militia, the governor decided, would be a 22-year-old volunteer named George Washington.

Today, Americans remember George Washington as a great Patriot, a military hero, and the first president of the United States. In 1754, however, he was just an ambitious young man. Washington wanted to become an officer in the British army. There was only one problem with his plan—most British officers believed that colonists made terrible soldiers.

The expedition into the Ohio Valley gave Washington a chance to prove them wrong. Near Fort Duquesne, Washington came across a French scouting party that was camped in the woods and ordered his men to open fire, leading to an easy victory. “I heard the bullets whistle,” he wrote afterward. “And, believe me, there is something charming in the sound.”

**militia** a small army made up of ordinary citizens who are trained to fight in an emergency
The French and Indian War Washington's whistling bullets were the first shots in a conflict known as the French and Indian War. This war was part of a long struggle between France and Great Britain over territory and power. Because many American Indians fought with France in this latest conflict, the colonists called it the French and Indian War. At the beginning of the war, the colonies met at Albany, where Benjamin Franklin proposed the Albany Plan of Union, which called for the British colonies to form an alliance for their own defense. However, his plan did not win much support because the colonies did not think it was necessary to work together, and many of them relied on British protection. To their credit, the British took measures to defend their colonies during the French and Indian War.

In 1755, Great Britain sent 1,400 British soldiers, led by General Edward Braddock, to Virginia to finish the job that Washington had started. Hoping to make a good impression on General Braddock, Washington joined the army as a volunteer, aiding the soldiers in clearing the French out of the Ohio Valley.

However, Braddock's march into the Ohio Valley was a disaster. The troops were ambushed by French sharpshooters and their American Indian allies. Two-thirds of the soldiers were killed in the attack, including General Braddock.

Washington himself narrowly escaped death. "I had four bullets through my Coat and two horses shot under me," he wrote in a letter. Showing great courage, Washington led the survivors back to Virginia. There, he was greeted as a hero.

The turning point of the French and Indian War came in 1759, when British troops captured Canada. As a result, in 1763, Great Britain and France signed a peace treaty, or agreement, finally ending the seven year war. In this treaty, France ceded, or gave, its claim of land in Canada to Great Britain.

Americans were thrilled with this victory because Great Britain now controlled a vastly expanded American empire. However, as the conflict with France drew to a close, new issues began to emerge between the colonists and Great Britain. A dramatic new chapter was about to begin for the American colonies.

This drawing by Benjamin Franklin is considered the first political cartoon in American history. In it, Franklin compares the colonies' lack of unity to a snake cut into pieces. Although the drawing was originally used to promote the Albany Plan, it would soon become a symbol of colonial unity and freedom.

Here George Washington plants the British flag at Fort Duquesne. The British captured the fort from the French in 1758 during the French and Indian War.
2. Early British Actions in the Colonies

Changes that were taking place in Great Britain soon clouded the colonists' bright future. A new king, George III, had begun his reign toward the end of the French and Indian War. Unfortunately, George was not regarded as a bright man, and as one historian wrote, "he was very stupid, really stupid." His lack of intelligence became evident because of the people whom George chose to help him. These advisors knew very little about the conditions in North America and were soon taking actions that enraged the colonists.

The Proclamation of 1763

The British government faced a number of problems after the French and Indian War. One was how to keep colonists and American Indians from killing each other as settlers pushed westward. In his Proclamation of 1763, George said to simply draw a line down the crest of the Appalachian Mountains and tell settlers to stay east of that line and Indians to stay west of it.

To Americans, the king's order suggested tyranny, or the unjust use of government power. They argued that the lands east of the Appalachians were already mostly settled and that the only place that farmers could find available land was west of the mountains. Besides, the proclamation was too late. Settlers were already crossing the mountains.

The British government ignored these arguments. To keep peace on the frontier, it decided to expand the British army in America to 7,500 men.
The Stamp Act  The British government had other problems besides keeping colonists and American Indians from fighting each other. One dilemma was how to pay off the large debt from the French and Indian War.

The solution seemed obvious to Prime Minister George Grenville, the leader of the British government. People in Great Britain were already paying taxes on everything from windows to salt. In contrast, Americans were probably the most lightly taxed people in the British Empire. It was time, said Grenville, for the colonists to pay their fair share of the cost of protecting them from Indians.

In 1765, Grenville proposed a new act, or law, called the Stamp Act, which required colonists to buy a stamp for every piece of paper they used. Newspapers, wills, licenses, and even playing cards had to be printed on stamped paper.

Once again, the colonists sensed tyranny. One newspaper, The Pennsylvania Journal, said that as soon as “this shocking Act was known, it filled all British America from one End to the other, with Astonishment and Grief.”

It wasn’t just the idea of higher taxes that upset the colonists. They were willing to pay taxes passed by their own assemblies, where their representatives could vote on them. Because the colonists had no representatives in Parliament, they saw the Stamp Act as a violation of their rights as British subjects. For this reason, they argued, Parliament had no right to tax them. “No taxation without representation!” they declared.

Loyalists simply refused to buy stamps, while other colonists protested the Stamp Act by sending messages to Parliament. Patriots, took more violent action. Mobs calling themselves Sons of Liberty attacked tax collectors’ homes. Protesters in Connecticut even started to bury one tax collector alive. Only when he heard dirt being shoveled onto his coffin did the terrified tax collector agree to resign from his post.

After months of protest, Parliament repealed, or canceled, the Stamp Act. Americans greeted the news with great celebration. Church bells rang, bands played, and everyone hoped the troubles with Great Britain were over.

repeal  to take back, or to cancel, a law
The Quartering Act  As anger over the Stamp Act began to fade, Americans noticed another law passed by Parliament in 1765. Called the Quartering Act, this law ordered colonial assemblies to provide British troops with quarters, or housing. The colonists were also told to furnish the soldiers with “candles, firing, bedding, cooking utensils, salt, vinegar, and . . . beer or cider.”

Of course, providing for the soldiers cost money. New Jersey protested that the new law was “as much an Act for laying taxes” on the colonists as the Stamp Act. New Yorkers asked why they should pay to keep troops in their colony. After all, they said, the soldiers just took up space and did nothing.

In 1767, the New York assembly decided not to approve any funds for “salt, vinegar and liquor” for the troops. In retaliation, the British government refused to let the assembly meet until it agreed to obey the Quartering Act. Once again, tempers began to rise on both sides of the Atlantic.

3. The Townshend Acts

The next British leader to face the challenge of taxing the colonies was Charles Townshend. Known as “Champagne Charlie” because of his habit of making speeches in Parliament after drinking champagne, Townshend believed that the colonists’ bad behavior made it even more important to retain an army in the British colonies. Once he was asked in Parliament whether he would dare to make the colonists pay for that army. Stamping his foot, Townshend shouted, “I will, I will!”

Townshend kept his promise, and in 1767, he persuaded Parliament to pass the Townshend Acts. The new laws placed a duty, or tax, on certain goods the colonies imported from Great Britain, including such popular items as glass, paint, paper, and tea.

A Boycott of British Goods  To many colonists, the Townshend duties were unacceptable. Once again, colonists were determined not to pay taxes that their assemblies had not voted on.

A Boston Patriot named Samuel Adams led the opposition to the Townshend Acts. Although Adams was a failure at business, he was gifted at stirring up protests through his speeches and writing. The governor of Massachusetts once complained, “Every dip of his pen stung like a horned snake.”

In a letter protesting the Townsend Act, Adams argued that the new duties violated the colonists’ rights as British citizens. The letter was sent to many of the other colonies. Soon, the colonies decided to boycott British goods in order to protect their rights. This was a peaceful form of protest that even Loyalists could support. One by one, all of the colonies agreed to support the boycott.

Since they did most of the shopping, women were very important in making the boycott work. The Virginia Gazette wrote that women could “do more for the good of her country than five hundred noisy
sons of liberty, with all their mobs and riots.” Women found many ways to avoid buying British imports. They sewed dresses out of homespun cloth, brewed tea from pine needles, and bought only American-made goods.

Repeal of the Townshend Acts  Meanwhile, a new leader named Lord North became head of the British government. Described by Townshend as a “great, heavy, booby-looking man,” Lord North embarrassed his supporters by taking naps in Parliament. However, he was good with numbers, and he could see that the Townshend duties were a big money-loser because duties didn’t begin to make up for all the money British merchants were losing because of the boycott.

Early in 1770, North persuaded Parliament to repeal all of the Townshend duties, except for one—the tax on tea. Although, some members of Parliament argued that the duty on tea would lead to further conflict with the colonies, King George refused to give up on the idea of taxing Americans. “I am clear that there must always be one tax to keep up the right,” the king said. “And, as such, I approve the Tea Duty.”

4. The Boston Massacre

On the same day that Parliament repealed most of the Townshend duties, a fight broke out between soldiers and colonists in Boston. When the dust cleared, five Bostonians were dead and others in the crowd were injured.

Patriots called this incident the Boston Massacre. A massacre is the killing of defenseless people. What really happened was a small riot.

In 1768, the British government sent soldiers to Boston to enforce the Townshend Acts. This colorized engraving, originally made by Paul Revere, shows the troops landing.
Trouble had been brewing in Boston for months before the riot. To the British, Boston Patriots were the worst troublemakers in the colonies. In 1768, the British government had sent four regiments of troops to keep order in Boston.

Bostonians resented the British soldiers and made fun of their red uniforms by calling them “lobsterbacks.” Samuel Adams even taught his dog to nip at soldiers’ heels.

Despite such insults from the colonists, the British troops were forbidden to fire on citizens, but knowing this only made Bostonians bolder in their attacks. General Thomas Gage, the commander of the British army in America, wrote that “the people were as Lawless . . . after the Troops arrived, as they were before.”

**Mob Violence Breaks Out** On March 5, 1770, a noisy mob began throwing rocks and ice balls at troops guarding the Boston Customs House. “Come on you Rascals, you bloody-backs,” they shouted. “Fire if you dare.” Some people tried to persuade the crowd to go home, as did Captain Thomas Preston, the commander of the soldiers, but their pleas had no effect.

As the mob pressed forward, the troops, in a panic, opened fire. The bullets hit several people in the crowd, including Crispus Attucks, a black man at the front of the crowd. Attucks was the first to die after being struck by two bullets, but more deaths would soon follow. The now enraged crowd went home only after receiving a promise that the troops would be tried for murder.

**Massacre or Self-Defense?**

Samuel Adams saw this event as a perfect opportunity to whip up anti-British feeling among the colonists. He called the riot in Boston a “horrid massacre” and had Paul Revere, a local silversmith, engrave a picture of it. Revere’s engraving shows soldiers firing at peaceful, unarmed citizens.

Prints of Revere’s engraving were distributed throughout the colonies, and Patriots saw the Boston Massacre as proof that the British should remove all of their British troops from the colonies. Loyalists, however, saw the tragedy as proof that British troops were needed more than ever, if only to control the Patriot hotheads.
One hero, a Boston lawyer named John Adams, came out of this sad event. Although John Adams was a Patriot like his cousin Samuel, he also believed that every person, even the British soldiers, had the right to a fair trial. Adams agreed to defend the soldiers, even though he knew that his action would cost him friends and clients.

At the murder trial, Adams argued that the troops had acted in self-defense. The jury agreed with Adams and found six of the soldiers not guilty, while the remaining two of them were found guilty only of manslaughter, or causing death without meaning to.

Throughout his long life, John Adams remained proud of his defense of the British soldiers. He said that upholding the law in this case was “one of the best pieces of service I ever rendered to my country.”

5. The Boston Tea Party

Despite the hopes of Patriots like Sam Adams, the Boston Massacre did not spark larger protests against British rule. Instead, the repeal of the Townshend duties led to a period of calm. While there was still a small duty on tea, the tax didn’t seem to bother Loyalists very much, and the Patriots knew they could always drink Dutch tea that had been smuggled into the colonies without paying duties.

However, things did not stay peaceful because in 1773, a new law called the Tea Act prompted more protests. One of these protests became known as the Boston Tea Party.

The Tea Act The Tea Act was Lord North’s attempt to rescue the British East India Company. This large trading company controlled all the trade between Great Britain and Asia. Although it had been a moneymaker for Great Britain for years, the American boycott of British tea hurt the company badly. By 1773, the tea company was in danger of going broke unless it could sell off the 17 million pounds of tea that were sitting in its London warehouses.

The Tea Act lowered the cost of tea that was sold by the British East India Company in the colonies. As a result, even taxed British tea became cheaper than smuggled Dutch tea. The Tea Act also gave the British East India Company a monopoly, or complete control, over tea sales in the colonies. From now on, the only merchants who could sell the bargain-priced tea were those chosen by the company.

Lord North may have thought he could persuade Americans to buy taxed tea by making it so cheap, but colonists weren’t fooled. They saw the Tea Act as still another attempt to tax them without their consent.
In addition, many merchants were alarmed by the East India Company’s monopoly over the tea trade. They wondered what the British government might try to control next. Would their next monopoly be on cloth or on sugar? Nervous merchants wondered what would happen to their businesses if other goods were also restricted.

**Tea Ships Arrive**  When the British East India Company’s tea ships sailed into American ports, angry protesters kept them from unloading their cargoes, causing more than one ship to turn back for England still filled with tea. In Boston, however, the royal governor ordered the British navy to block the exit from Boston Harbor, insisting that the three tea ships would not leave until all their tea was unloaded.

On December 16, 1773, the Sons of Liberty decided to unload the tea, but not in the way the governor had in mind. That night, about 60 men dressed as Mohawk Indians boarded the three ships. One of them, George Hewes, described what happened:

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\text{We then were ordered by our commander to open the hatches and take out all the chests of tea and throw them overboard... and we immediately proceeded to execute his orders, first cutting and splitting the chests with our tomahawks... In about three hours from the time we went on board, we had thus broken and thrown overboard every tea chest to be found on the ship... We were surrounded by British armed ships, but no attempt was made to resist us.}
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The Sons of Liberty dumped about 90,000 pounds of tea into the sea that night, leaving everything else aboard the ship untouched. News of the Boston Tea Party excited Patriots throughout the colonies. “This is the most magnificent moment of all,” wrote John Adams in his journal the next day. “This destruction of the tea is so bold, so daring, so firm... it must have... important consequences.” He was right.

6. The Intolerable Acts

The news of the Boston Tea Party, stunned Lord North, who believed that he had helped the colonists by sending them cheap tea. However, instead of being thankful for his generosity, the colonists had thrown the cheap tea into the sea! For North, the colonists’ actions had gone too far.

King George agreed with Lord North, believing that the issue was no longer about taxes but about Great Britain’s control over the colonies. “We must master them,” he declared, “or totally leave them alone.” The king wasn’t about to leave the colonies to themselves, however.

In 1774, Great Britain’s anger led Parliament to pass a new series of laws that were so harsh that many colonists called them intolerable, or unacceptable. Throughout the colonies, they became known as the Intolerable Acts.

Parliament Punishes Massachusetts

The Intolerable Acts were designed to punish Massachusetts for the Boston Tea Party. The first law closed Boston Harbor to all shipping until the ruined tea was paid for. The second law placed the government of Massachusetts firmly under British control. Colonists in Massachusetts could not even hold a town meeting without the colonial governor’s permission. The third law said that British soldiers who were accused of murder would be tried in England, not in the colonies. Finally, more troops were sent to Boston to enforce the new laws.

A few British leaders worried that the Intolerable Acts might push the colonies into rebellion. But George III was sure they would force the colonists to give in to British authority.

The Colonies Begin to Unite

In fact, the Intolerable Acts did not force the colonists to give in. Boston Patriots declared they would “abandon their city to flames” before paying a penny for the lost tea. Colonists in other cities showed their support by closing their shops, or by sending food and money to Boston so that its citizens would not starve.
In Virginia, lawmakers drafted a resolution in support of Massachusetts. The Virginians said that everyone’s rights were at stake. “An attack made on one of our sister colonies,” they declared, “is an attack made on all British America.”

The Virginians also called for a congress, or meeting, of delegates from all the colonies. The purpose of the congress would be to find a peaceful solution to the conflicts with Great Britain.

Not all Americans agreed with this plan. In every colony, there were Loyalists who thought that Bostonians had gone too far and should pay for the tea. If they were forced to choose, they would side with the king against Sam Adams and his Sons of Liberty. In their view, it was the misguided Patriots who were causing all the trouble.

The First Continental Congress

In September 1774, some 50 leaders from 12 colonies met in Philadelphia. The meeting brought together delegates from most of the British colonies on the North American continent, so it was called the First Continental Congress.

The delegates were used to thinking of themselves as citizens of their own colonies, but Patrick Henry, a leader from Virginia, urged them to come together as one people. “I am not a Virginian,” he declared, “but an American.” However, only strong Patriots like Sam and John Adams were ready to think of themselves this way, and other delegates were strong Loyalists who still thought of themselves as British. Still others, like George Washington, were somewhere in between. Only one thing united the delegates—their love of liberty and hatred of tyranny.

In spite of their differences, the delegates agreed to send a respectful message to King George. The message urged the king to consider their complaints and to recognize their rights.

The delegates also called for a new boycott of British goods until Parliament repealed the Intolerable Acts. Finally, they agreed to meet again the following May if the boycott didn’t work.

The Colonies Form Militias

Patriots in towns and cities throughout the colonies organized boycotts against British goods. They also formed local militias in case the boycott didn’t work. In New England, the volunteers called themselves Minutemen because they could be ready to fight in 60 seconds.

Across the colonies, militias marched and drilled. In New Hampshire, unknown persons stole 100 barrels of gunpowder and weapons from a British fort. Similar thefts occurred in other colonies. Rather than forcing the colonies to give in, the Intolerable Acts had brought the two sides to the brink of war.
7. Lexington and Concord

King George had made many mistakes in his decisions about the colonies, which the First Continental Congress listed out in their message to the king. However, rather than consider the colonists’ complaints, King George refused to even answer their message. “The New England governments are in a state of rebellion,” he said. “Blows must decide whether they are to be subject to this country or independent.” In Boston, General Gage, the king’s commander of British troops in America, got ready to deliver those blows.

The First Blow at Lexington  In April 1775, a spy told General Gage that the colonists were hiding a large supply of gunpowder and weapons in the nearby village of Concord. General Gage decided to strike at once.

The general ordered 700 of his best troops to march to Concord and seize the weapons. To keep the colonists from moving the weapons, the attack had to be a surprise, so Gage had his troops march the 20 miles to Concord at night.

But the colonists had their own spies, and when Gage’s troops slipped out of Boston on April 18, 1775, Patriots were watching their every move. Soon Paul Revere and others were galloping through the countryside, warning colonists that the British soldiers were coming.

The news reached Lexington, a town on the road to Concord, in the early hours of April 19. Led by Captain John Parker, a small band of Minutemen gathered nervously in the chilly night air.
After their victory at Lexington, the British set off for Concord. The engraving shows their troops marching there. At Concord, the Minutemen engaged in another battle with the British. Surprised by the fury of the colonial attack, the British fled in panic.

At dawn, the British troops reached the town green. “Stand your ground,” ordered Parker. “Don’t fire unless fired upon, but if they mean to have a war, let it begin here.” As the Minutemen faced the British troops, a shot rang out—from where, no one knew for certain. Without orders, the soldiers rushed forward, shooting wildly, and a few Minutemen managed to return fire.

When the firing stopped, eight colonists lay dead or dying, and another ten were left limping to safety with painful wounds. The British troops gave three cheers for victory and continued their marched on to Concord.

**The Second Blow at Concord**  By breakfast time, the British were in Concord, searching for gunpowder and weapons. However, the colonists had hidden them, and in frustration, the soldiers piled up gun carriages and set them on fire.

On a ridge outside the city, militiamen from the surrounding countryside watched the smoke rise. “Will you let them burn the town down?” shouted one man. Captain Isaac Davis replied, “I haven’t a man that’s afraid to go.” Davis marched with his volunteers down the hill, and as they approached Concord’s North Bridge, the British troops opened fire. Davis fell dead, a bullet through his heart.

The British expected the Americans to break and run, but to their surprise, the Minutemen stood their ground and fired back. Soon, it was the redcoats who were running away in panic.

The retreat back to Boston was a nightmare for the British because thousands of armed and angry Minutemen lined their route, shooting at every redcoat they saw. Some accounts show that by the end of the day, 74 British soldiers were dead and another 200 were wounded or missing while the colonists counted their own losses at only 49 dead and 41 wounded. A British officer described what it was like to face the colonists’ fury that day. “Whoever looks upon them as an irregular mob,” the officer said, “will find himself much mistaken.”
Indeed, since the French and Indian War, the British had been mistaken about the colonists again and again. Their biggest mistake was in thinking that ordinary people—farmers, merchants, workers, and housewives—would not fight for the rights that they held dear. At Lexington and Concord, Americans proved they were not only willing to fight for their rights, they were even willing to die for them.

Lesson Summary

In this lesson, you read about tensions between the colonies and Great Britain in the mid-1700s.

Before 1763 During the French and Indian War (1754-1763), Great Britain and France fought for territory and power in North America. When the war ended, France gave up Canada to Great Britain, which now had a much larger American empire to control.

Early British Actions in the Colonies The French and Indian War left Great Britain with huge debts. To raise money, Parliament decided to pass along the war costs to the Americans. To do this Parliament passed the Stamp Act in 1765. Colonists protested the Stamp Act because it was passed without colonial representation. Colonists also protested the Quartering Act, which required them to house British troops at the colonies’ expense.

The Townshend Acts and the Boston Massacre The Townshend Acts imposed more taxes on the colonies, which divided many colonists into opposing camps. Loyalists urged obedience to Great Britain, but Patriots resisted “taxation without representation” through protests, boycotts, and riots. Tensions in Boston erupted into violence in 1770 when British troops fired into a crowd of colonists in what became known as the Boston Massacre.

The Boston Tea Party and the Intolerable Acts When Patriots protested a new tax on tea by throwing tea into Boston Harbor in 1773, Great Britain responded by passing the Intolerable Acts to force the colonies to give in to British authority. Patriots responded by forming the First Continental Congress and organizing colonial militias.

Lexington and Concord Fighting between Patriots and British troops at Lexington and Concord in 1775 showed that colonists would not only fight for their rights, but were willing to die for them.

This statue in Lexington commemorates the start of the Revolutionary War. The statue represents the Minutemen led by Captain John Parker who faced the British troops at the battle of Lexington.