



THE SHOT HEARD ROUND THE WORLD

By our war correspondent

April 20, 1775

THE FIRST SHOTS of the Revolutionary War were fired at Lexington and Concord yesterday. The battles marked the beginning of a historic struggle for independence from Britain by its American colonies.

In the early morning light, colonial militia dared to stand in the path of British soldiers on Lexington Common. The colonists slowed the redcoats' advance on nearby Concord, where the patriots' weapons and supplies were said to be stored.

Outnumbered by British soldiers, the small group of militiamen began to scatter. Suddenly, there was a shot and then both sides opened fire. The conflict claimed the lives of eight colonists, while British casualties were light. In the patriots' group was Prince Estabrook, an enslaved man, who was wounded in the battle, and has become the first African-American soldier to fight in the American Revolution.

Later, hundreds of colonists battled redcoats at the North Bridge at Concord, gaining the upper hand. As the British retreated from the town, they were ambushed. In total, 73 redcoats and 49 patriots were killed.

The colonists likely prevailed because they had been tipped off the night before the attack. Craftsman Paul Revere rode on horseback from Boston to Lexington to spread the word that

WOODEN "liberty poles" were symbols of freedom and independence during the American Revolution, often erected by the Sons of Liberty in town squares across Massachusetts. Boston's famous Liberty Tree—an elm tree near Boston Common—also served as a rallying point for patriots and a site of protest against British rule. It was later cut down by British soldiers and American colonists loyal to the British Crown.

the redcoats were coming. British troops detained him before he reached Concord, but he was eventually let go when the fighting began. With the help of fellow patriots, his "midnight ride" spread the word, and is certain to go into legend.

Armed conflict has looked unavoidable for some time. Many colonists regard the British monarchy and its government as tyrannical. The British regard many colonists as disloyal, while Massachusetts was recently declared to be in a state of rebellion.

Armed colonists have been called "traitors" by the British, whose General Thomas Gage has been ordered to use force to stop the colonial rebels from stockpiling weapons. The patriots have set up Minutemen companies, ready to march at a moment's warning.

Massachusetts and the other American colonies are now at war with Britain. If they win, Lexington and Concord will go down in history as the birthplace of American freedom.