

The Battle of Lexington and Concord: 19 April 1775

This account of events was written by Ann Hulton, the sister of one of the customs' commissioners, to her friend Mrs. Lightbody in Bristol. It presents the actions of the American colonists in a very unpleasant light. This account is different from that produced by the [Massachusetts](#) provincial congress and [General Gage's](#) account.

On the 18th instant at 11 at night, about 800 grenadiers and light infantry were ferried across the bay to Cambridge; from whence they marched to Concord, about 20 miles. The congress had been lately assembled at that place, and it was imagined that the general had intelligence of a magazine being formed there and that they were going to destroy it.

The people in the country (who are all furnished with arms and have what they call minute companies in every town ready to march on any alarm) had a signal, it's supposed, by a light from one of the steeples in town, upon the troops embarking. The alarm spread through the country so that before daybreak the people in general were in arms and on their march to Concord. About daybreak a number of the people appeared before the troops near Lexington. They were called to, to disperse, when they fired on the troops and ran off. Upon which the light infantry pursued them and brought down about fifteen of them. The troops went on to Concord and executed the business they were sent on, and on their return found two or three of their people lying in the agonies of death, scalped and their noses and ears cut off and eyes bored out, which exasperated the soldiers exceedingly, a prodigious number of people now occupying the hills, woods, and stone walls along the road. The light troops drove some parties from the hills but all the road being enclosed with stone walls served as a cover to the rebels, from whence they fired on the troops still running off whenever they had fired, but still supplied by fresh numbers who came from many parts of the country. In this manner were the troops harassed in their return for seven [or] eight miles. They were almost exhausted and had expended near the whole of their ammunition when to their great joy they were relieved by a brigade of troops under the command of Lord Percy with two pieces of artillery. The troops now combated with fresh ardour and marched in their return with undaunted countenances, receiving sheets of fire all the way for many miles, yet having no visible enemy to combat with, for they never would face em in an open field, but always skulked and fired from behind walls and trees, and out of windows of houses, but this cost them dear for the soldiers entered those dwellings and put all the men to death. Lord Percy has gained great honour by his conduct through this day of severe service; he was exposed to the hottest of the fire and animated the troops with great coolness and spirit. Several officers are wounded and about 100 soldiers. The killed amount to near so; as to the enemy we can have no exact account but it is said there was about ten times the number of them engaged and that near 2,000 of 'em have fallen.

The troops returned to Charlestown about sunset after having some of 'em marched near fifty miles, and being engaged from daybreak in action, without respite or refreshment, and about ten in the evening they were brought back to Boston. The next day the country poured down its thousands, and at this time from the entrance of Boston Neck at Roxbury round by Cambridge to Charlestown is surrounded by at least 20,000 men, who are raising batteries on three or four different hills. We are now cut off from all communication with the country and many people

must soon perish with famine in this place. Some families have laid in store of provisions against a siege. We are threatened, that whilst the outlines are attacked, with a rising of the inhabitants within, and fire and sword, a dreadful prospect before us, and you know how many and how dear are the objects of our care. The Lord preserve us all and grant us an happy issue out of these troubles.

For several nights past I have expected to be roused by the firing of cannon. Tomorrow is Sunday and we may hope for one day of rest. At present a solemn dead silence reigns in the streets, numbers have packed up their effects and quitted the town, but the general has put a stop to any more removing and here remains in town about 9,000 souls (besides the servants of the Crown). These are the greatest security; the general declared that if a gun is fired within the town, the inhabitants shall fall a sacrifice. Amidst our distress and apprehension I am rejoiced our British hero was preserved. My Lord Percy had a great many and miraculous escapes in the late action. This amiable young nobleman with the graces which attracts admiration, possesses the virtues of the heart and all those qualities that form the great soldier - vigilant, active, temperate, humane, great command of temper, fortitude in enduring hardships and fatigue, and intrepidity in dangers. His lordship's behaviour in the day of trial has done honour to the Percys. Indeed, all the officers and soldiers behaved with the greatest bravery, it is said.