

The American Revolution



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Sons of the American Revolution

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Battles of Lexington and Concord, 1775

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In the interim, Patriot Colonel James Barrett withdrew his militia from the town of Concord and marched them across the North Bridge, onto a hill about one mile from the town. He continued observation of the British column from this high ground position. Meanwhile, reinforcements continued to pour into his unit.

Lieutenant Colonel Smith entered Concord, divided his force, and began carrying out his orders to search the town for war materials. A company of grenadiers under command of one of the new Captains, Mundy Pole, secured the bridge south of town. A Captain Parsons led seven companies of light infantry to secure the North Bridge, and these 100 men were clearly visible to the Patriot Militia assembled on the high ground just beyond the bridge.

Local Loyalists had informed the British that Ephraim Jones's Tavern on the South Bridge road was the site of clandestine military supplies. Initially Jones refused to talk, but Major Pitcairn convinced him to do so at gun point. Three massive 24 pound artillery pieces were uncovered from their hiding places on the property. These were pieces capable of mounting fire over Boston Harbor and onto the town of Boston. These cannons were the only significant military materials uncovered or confiscated during the

entire operation. Loyalists spies had also indicated that Barrett's farm should be searched. This was accomplished in great detail, but these inspectors were a week late. Had the British arrived earlier, they would have discovered a real arsenal of weapons.

The militiamen under Colonel Barrett poised on Punkatasset Hill, just outside the North Bridge and observing the British actions south of the bridge, decided to descend this hill and advance to the next lower hill, nearer the British troops. This position placed them within 300 yards of the North Bridge. The British 4th and 10th Regiments retired from that hill position as the militia advanced. Five companies of minutemen and five more companies of militiamen from the neighboring towns of Acton, Bedford and Lincoln had joined Colonel Barrett's force, which now totaled 400 men. British Captain Laurie was a last minute add-on to the 4th and 10th Regiments, making him new to the men of this force. The British defending North Bridge numbered no more than 95.

Colonels, Barrett of Concord, Robinson of Westford and Captain Isaac Davis of Acton debated which course of action to take. Captain Davis said, "I am not afraid to go, and I haven't a man that's afraid to go." Colonel Barrett ordered the minutemen and militiamen to load, but ordered them to fire only when fired upon, and to advance on the British. The British Captain ordered his men to fall back across North Bridge. The two forces were about 50 yards apart with the Concord River and its bridge between them. They were considerably further apart than the ideal distance for curb to curb shooting.