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THE BATTLE
ON
LEXINGTON COMMON

APRIL 19, 1775

FRANK WARREN COBURN





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Lexington.*

BY OLIVER WENDELL HOLMES.

Slowly the mist o'er the meadow was creeping,
Bright on the dewy buds glistened the sun,
When from his couch, while his children were
sleeping,

Rose the bold rebel and shouldered his gun.
Waving her golden veil
Over the silent dale,

Blithe looked the morning on cottage and spire;
Hushed was his parting sigh,
While from his noble eye

Flashed the last sparkle of liberty's fire.

On the smooth green where the fresh leaf is
springing

Calmly the first-born of glory have met;
Hark! the death-volley around them is ringing!
Look! with their life-blood the young grass
is wet!

Faint is the feeble breath,
Murmuring low in death,

"Tell to our sons how their fathers have died;"
Nerveless the iron hand,
Raised for its native land,

Lies by the weapon that gleams at its side.

Over the hillsides the wild knell is tolling,
From their far hamlets the yeomanry come;
As through the storm-clouds the thunder-burst
rolling,
Circles the beat of the mustering drum.

*Printed herein by special arrangement with the authorized publishers, Houghton, Mifflin Company.

Fast on the soldier's path
Darken the waves of wrath,—
Long have they gathered and loud shall they
fall ;
Red glares the musket's flash,
Sharp rings the rifle's crash,
Blazing and clanging from thicket and wall.

Gayly the plume of the horseman was dancing,
Never to shadow his cold brow again ;
Proudly at morning the war-steed was prancing,
Reeking and panting he droops on the rein ;
Pale is the lip of scorn,
Voiceless the trumpet horn,
Torn is the silken-fringed red cross on high ;
Many a belted breast
Low on the turf shall rest
Ere the dark hunters the herd have passed by.

Snow-girdled crags where the hoarse wind is
raving,
Rocks where the weary floods murmur and
wail,
Wilds where the fern by the furrow is waving,
Reeled with the echoes that rode on the gale ;
Far as the tempest thrills
Over the darkened hills,
Far as the sunshine streams over the plain,
Roused by the tyrant band,
Woke all the mighty land,
Girded for battle, from mountain to main.

Green be the graves where her martyrs are
lying!
Shroudless and tombless they sunk to their
rest,

**While o'er their ashes the starry fold flying
Wraps the proud eagle they roused from his
nest,
Borne on her Northern pine,
Long o'er the foaming brine
Spread her broad banner to storm and to sun ;
Heaven keep her ever free,
Wide as o'er land and sea
Floats the fair emblem her heroes have won**

Lincoln.

PRESIDENT LINCOLN'S OPINION OF HOLMES'S
POEM ENTITLED "LEXINGTON."*

"One of Lincoln's favorite poems was Holmes's 'Last-Leaf'; and one November day we were driving out to the Soldier's Home, near Washington, when the aspect of the scene recalled the lines to his mind. He slowly and with excellent judgment recited the whole poem. Enlarging upon the pathos, wit, and humor of Holmes, I found that the President had never seen a copy of the genial doctor's works, so far as he could remember, although he was not certain that he had not. I offered to lend him my copy of the poems, a little blue-and-gold book; and the next time I went to the White House I took it with me. About a week after leaving the book with the President, I called at the house one evening, and, finding him alone, we settled down for a quiet chat. He took from a drawer in his table the blue-and-gold Holmes, and went over the book with much gusto, reading or reciting several poems that had struck

*Extract from an article in *The Century Magazine* of January, 1895, entitled, "Glimpses of Lincoln in War Time," by Noah Brooks. Reprinted here by special permission of THE CENTURY CO.

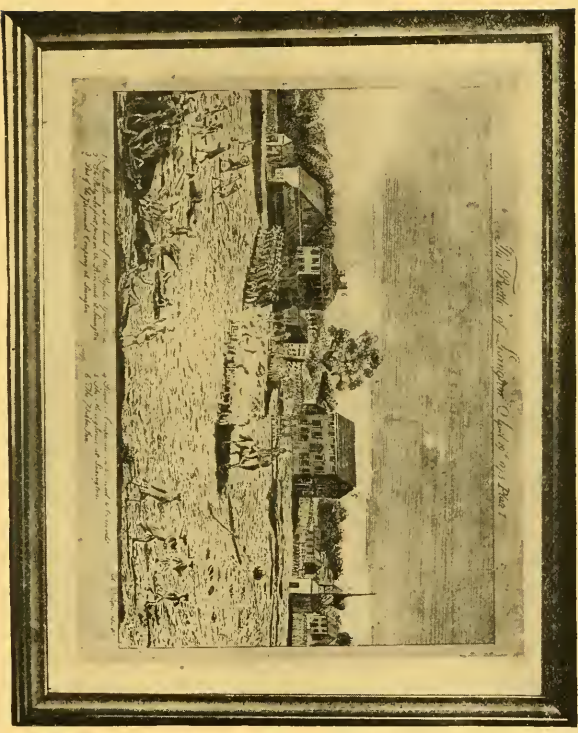
his fancy. He expressed his surprise at finding that some of the verses which he admired most had been drifting about in the newspapers without the name of the author attached to them ; and it was in this way, he said, that he had found 'The Last-Leaf,' although he did know that Dr. Holmes was the author. Finally he said that he liked 'Lexington' as well as anything in the book, 'The Last Leaf' alone excepted, and he began to read the poem ; but when he came to the stanza beginning

*Green be the graves where her martyrs are lying !
Shroudless and tombless they sunk to their rest,—*

his voice faltered, and he gave me the book with the whispered request, 'You read it ; I can't.' Months afterward, when several ladies were in the Red Parlor one evening, calling upon Mrs. Lincoln, he recited that poem without missing a word, so far as I could remember it. And yet I do not believe that he ever saw the text of 'Lexington' except during the few busy days when he had my book."

BOSTON :
F. L. COBURN & CO.
PRINTERS

THE BATTLE OF LEXINGTON BY EARL AND DOOLITTLE, 1775



The Battle of Lexington April 19 1775

Engraved by Earl and Doolittle
from a drawing by the late General
Earl of Sandwich
1782

THE
BATTLE
ON
LEXINGTON COMMON,

APRIL 19, 1775.

CONSISTING OF AN ACCOUNT OF THAT ACTION, NOW
FIRST PUBLISHED, AND A REPRINT OF MY LECTURE
ENTITLED "FICTION AND TRUTH ABOUT THE BATTLE
ON LEXINGTON COMMON," PUBLISHED IN 1918.

ALSO

A COMPLETE ROSTER OF CAPTAIN JOHN PARKER'S COM-
PANY; A LIST OF THE SEVENTY-SEVEN MEN WHO
WERE WITH HIM THAT MORNING; AND A LIST OF THE
EIGHT MEN WHO ARE KNOWN TO HAVE RETURNED
THE BRITISH FIRE.

BY FRANK WARREN COBURN.

LEXINGTON, MASS., U. S. A.

PUBLISHED BY THE AUTHOR

1921

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Frank Warren Coburn

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DEDICATION

TO MY WIFE

HATTIE JANE COBURN,

AND SON,

CHARLES LYMAN COBURN.

PREFACE.

This is not a history of the entire battle of April 19, 1775, for that extended over more than thirty miles of highway, from Lexington up to Concord, and back to Bunker Hill in Charlestown. The interested reader is referred to my larger work covering all, first published in 1912, now out of print, but to be found in quite a few public libraries. The opening contest was on Lexington Common, less than a half hour in time, and a little before sunrise. It was the real beginning of the American Revolution, and as such is of sufficient importance to merit an especial consideration.

I am glad to be able to publish a complete roster of Captain Parker's Company; of those who stood with him on that morning; and of the eight who returned the British fire. Up to this time no one has named so many as belonging to his Company on that day; nor until last year has any one attempted to give to the student in American history a list of those who were with him before sunrise on that April morning, and participated with him in that first little battle. I prepared such a

list, which was published in *The Boston Daily Globe*, April 19, 1920, and because of the accidental omission of one name, was repeated with the correction, in *The Boston Sunday Globe* of May 9, 1920. The list of eight who returned the British fire first appeared in my paper entitled "Fiction and Truth About the Battle on Lexington Common, April 19, 1775," read before the Lexington Historical Society on Dec. 12, 1916. That was published in book form in 1918, and appears again herein, for convenient reference in establishing the outlines for this little sketch.

It has been rather difficult to assemble these names. I am of course not positive that I have them all, and will gladly welcome any correction or addition, that this roster may sometime be complete. I am inclined to believe, however, that no more can be added.

Of the illustrations I offer numbers one to nine and number thirteen as of more or less historical value, and the others as interesting specimens of the imaginative kind, frequently used in historical writings. As "studies" they may entertain the reader.

I am indebted to the Lexington Historical Society for the privilege of reproducing num-

bers two, three, four, five, seven, and nine,
and gratefully record herein my thanks.

FRANK WARREN COBURN.

Lexington, Mass., April 19, 1921.

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THE BATTLE ON LEXINGTON COMMON.

It is a little after midnight on the morning of the 19th of April in the year 1775. The air is cool and bracing, and the waning moon shines brightly from the eastern sky down upon Lexington Common, revealing groups of excited men here and there. Others are seen passing in and out of Buckman Tavern, from many of the windows of which gleam the modest tallow candles.

As the moments pass, other men come in from the Boston Road; from the Concord Road; and from the Bedford Road; some unarmed, but many of them with their guns.

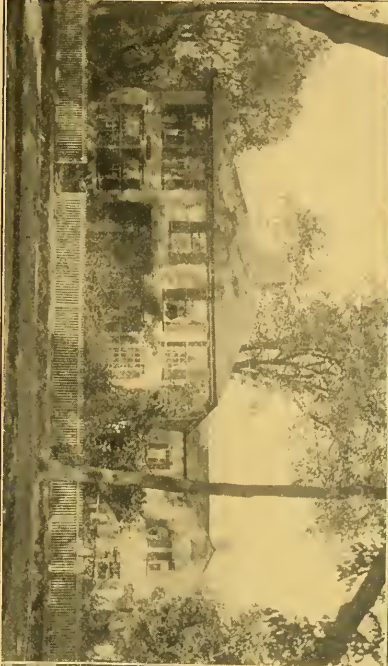
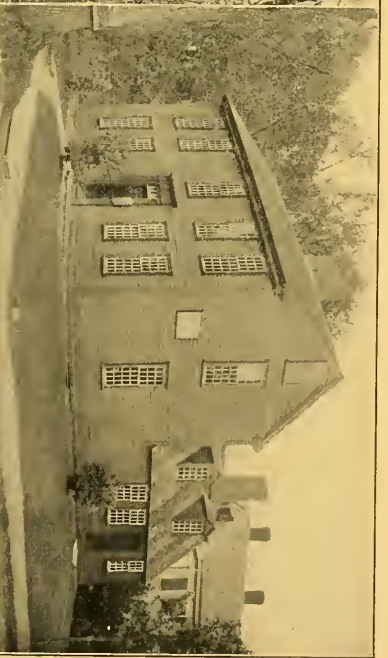
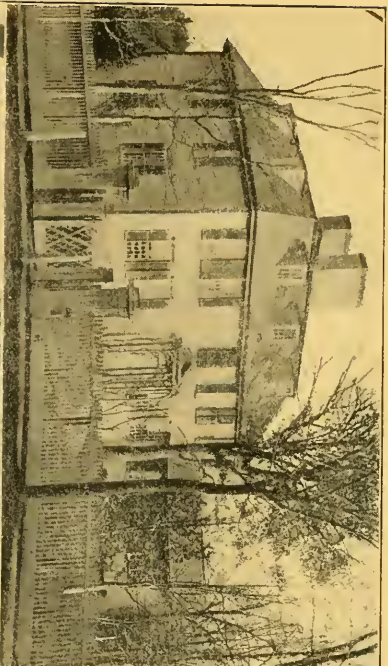
What does it all mean?

On the previous afternoon, before sundown, Solomon Brown, a fellow townsman, had brought the news of ten mounted British officers on their way out from Boston toward Lexington. He had been to Boston and had passed them on his way home, and for a more careful estimate of their purpose, fell behind, then rode ahead and re-passed them several times. Their top coats were closely muffled,

evidently to hide their uniforms, which, however, the wind occasionally revealed to him.

Brown thought there were too many of them to be riding away from Army Headquarters in Boston at so late an hour in the afternoon, if on an innocent and commonplace pleasure excursion. Finally he rode ahead once more and left them, stopped at Sergeant Munroe's Tavern, and reported to that officer his suspicions. Munroe, too, was mentally disturbed, and immediately communicated his anxiety to some of the Minute Men, who in turn notified others farther away.

Their first thought was for the safety of John Hancock, President of the Provincial Congress, and of Samuel Adams, both of whom were stopping at the Parsonage on the North Road, a little way from the Common. Ten mounted officers ordinarily were enough to easily abduct two civilians. It was feared that such was their object on their return. Accordingly Munroe proceeded to the Common, despatched a messenger to his Captain, John Parker, selected three scouts, Solomon Brown, Jonathan Loring, and Elijah Sanderson, to follow after them. They had then disappeared up the Concord Road and over Concord Hill



BUCKMAN TAVERN
JONATHAN HARRINGTON HOUSE

HANCOCK-CLARKE HOUSE
MUNROE TAVERN

Next he ordered eight men for guard duty at the Parsonage, and one to go down the Boston Road to watch for any additional force of an enemy that might be on their way to Lexington.

Now, at a little after midnight, there are at least forty Minute Men on the Common. They are alert, anxious and determined.

Hoof-beats down the Boston Road are heard, faintly at first, now louder and louder; and now dimly is seen the shadowy outline of a single horseman galloping toward them. Soon he reins in at the Tavern, and excited men gather about him to listen to his one sentence of alarm:—

“The British are coming out; to arms, to arms!”

Away he rides up the North Road to the Parsonage, but not before he is recognized as Paul Revere, whose mission is to alarm the country, and incidentally to warn Hancock and Adams, who he knows are especially wanted as enemies of the King. He has come from Boston and Charlestown, and Medford and Menotomy.

Half an hour later comes William Dawes, another messenger, over a longer route,

through Roxbury, Brighton and Cambridge, with the same great tidings:—

“The British are coming out; to arms, to arms!”

Such is the midnight alarm in Lexington.

As Revere and Dawes leave the Parsonage they are joined by Dr. Samuel Prescott, of Concord, who happens to be visiting in Lexington this evening. His proffered service as guide to Concord is gladly accepted, for he knows the road and the homes to be alarmed along the way. The three ride together until less than a mile into Lincoln, the one town between Lexington and Concord, when they are halted by the ten British officers. Prescott escapes by jumping his horse over the wall and riding down into the valley, where rise the head waters of the Shawsheen River, and eventually reaches Concord. Dawes escapes, disappearing back toward Lexington. Revere is a prisoner, and with other prisoners, is taken back to within hearing of the wild reveille on Lexington Common. The British officers, also hearing, are in turn alarmed, release their prisoners, and hastily disappear toward Boston, naturally avoiding Lexington Common on their way.

Upon his release Revere hastens across the



PAUL REVERE



WILLIAM DAWES

swamp at the north of the Common, and thence to the Parsonage; goes with the inmates of that home, including Hancock and Adams, on their flight into Billerica, and returns to Buckman Tavern to save a trunk full of papers belonging to Hancock. He secures it, and comes to the Common, where Parker's men are drawn up; passes through the rear; hears the opening British volley, and turns to see the clouds of powder smoke rising above the field. Then he hastens away, and Lexington Common knows nothing more of Paul Revere.

Let us also return to the Common, and so go back a little in point of time.

It is now about one o'clock. Captain Parker has just arrived from his home, over two miles away in the southerly part of the town near the Waltham line. A few more Minute Men come with him, and these, with the others, gather around their commander. He listens to their reports of the midnight happenings. Another messenger is sent down the Boston Road, for the first one has not returned. Nor does any one yet know of the fate of Solomon Brown and the other two scouts sent after the ten British officers the night before.

The night air is chilly. For the comfort of

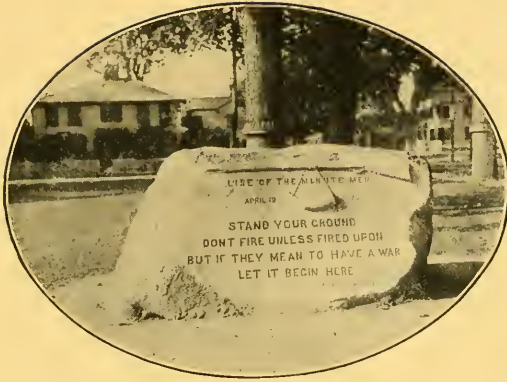
his men Parker dismisses them, with orders to remain within drum call. Those living near return to their homes, and those living at greater distances adjourn to the Tavern.

Through the long and anxious hours that follow, the gun volleys and the bell in the old Belfry, which stands on the Common near the Meeting House, summon American men to defend American homes.

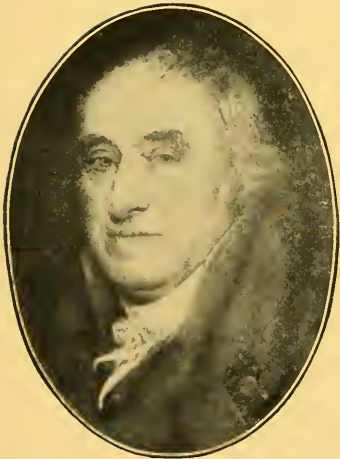
And still they come; not only those of Parker's Company, but others; some even from our neighboring town of Woburn, off to the eastward. Among those are Robert Douglass and Sylvanus Wood, both members of their respective Woburn Companies, who nevertheless enlist with Parker at his solicitation for the threatening emergency.

The second messenger sent down the Boston Road has not returned, nor has the third, nor as yet the fourth. One night traveller, though, does report that he has seen no British.

Away to the eastward faint streaks of morning light are now creeping upward from the horizon, and the songs of our little feathered friends and neighbors begin to accompany the ruder clang of that iron tongue which hangs in its bronze throat up in the old Belfry.



BOULDER MARKING LINE OF THE MINUTE MEN



SERGT. WILLIAM MUNROE



FIFER JONATHAN HARRINGTON

Then another sound, that of a galloping horse coming up the Boston Road, bearing the fourth messenger, Captain Thaddeus Bowman, with the startling news of an invading army only half a mile away.

"*Beat the drum! To arms, to arms!*" is the cry of Captain Parker; and his drummer, William Diamond, awakens hills and valley with his warlike sounds.

On the run come the Minute Men, and join their Captain in the road between the Meeting House and Tavern. Then Parker commands:

"Load with powder and ball! Every man of you who is equipped follow me; and those of you who are not equipped, go into the Meeting House and furnish yourselves from the magazine, and immediately join the Company."

Joseph Comee, Caleb Harrington, and Joshua Simonds hasten to comply with their Captain's order.

Parker then leads the others to the middle of the Common, and forms them into a single line of thirty-eight men, for they are all who are now ready, this first moment of the Revolution.

Others are rapidly coming, and soon Sergeant Munroe is forming a second line back, and in support of his Captain. These shall number

nearly as many more in the few minutes that follow. Counting both lines at last, with the few detached members in the Meeting House and over the walls by the roadside, the complete Roster is but seventy-seven!

Major John Pitcairn is riding at the head of the advancing British soldiers coming up the Boston Road. He is in command of the six companies sent in advance by Lieut-Col. Smith to disarm and disperse the Lexington Minute Men. These six companies number about four hundred men. Smith's remaining forces are back a mile or two, and are as many more.

Pitcairn hears the reverberating drum-call of Diamond; recognizes its defiance; interprets it as a challenge, and calls,—

“Halt!”

They are now nearer the Common than the Woburn Road, less than half a mile.

Then comes Pitcairn's order to load, followed by another to forward march.

On they come, rapidly, almost on the run. A rattle of equipments; a tramp of heavy feet; a dim mass of moving men; nearer and nearer; then the gleam of muskets; then the scarlet of their uniforms; then the command of officers riding in advance.



MAJOR JOHN PITCAIRN

It is not strange that one of Parker's men says :

"There are so few of us it is folly to stand here ! "

Captain Parker hears that remark, and loudly exclaims : —

"The first man who offers to run shall be shot down !" Not one man has a wish or a thought of running.

Walking down the line he continues :

"Stand your ground. — Don't fire unless fired upon. — *If they mean to have war, let it begin here !*"

The British divide at the apex of the Common, and halt in the two spreading roads. The Meeting House stands between, and its easterly windows are brightening up a little with the rays of light from the coming sunrise.

Major John Pitcairn, a brave man and a fine physical representative of the English army officer, rides ahead to within one hundred feet of Captain Parker's line, exclaiming :

"Lay down your arms, you damned rebels, and disperse."

Captain Parker realizes that the force in his front is more than five times greater than his own, and therefore gives the order to retire.

He does not order the laying down of arms, every man carries away his gun.

Pitcairn observes all of that and shouts :

“Damn you, why don’t you lay down your arms?”

Not one of the Minute Men heeds Pitcairn, as they march toward the northerly end of the Common.

In the excitement of the moment one of the mounted British officers, about thirty feet in the rear of Pitcairn, brandishes his sword, which his soldiers take for a signal to huzza in unison. Then the officer fires his pistol toward the Minute Men.

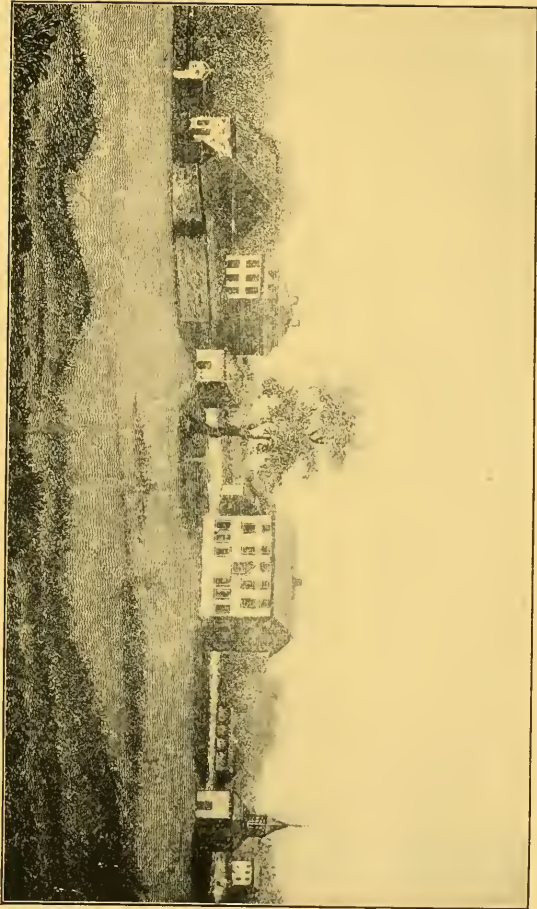
Pitcairn has not yet given the order to fire, and concludes that he is being attacked on the flank or rear. He no longer hesitates, but commands :

“Fire!”

His men fail to obey. For a moment a fearful silence rests over the Common. He is furious with passion and shouts :

“Fire, damn you, fire!”

Eight or nine men, a part of the first platoon, then fire, but altogether too high,—over the heads of the Minute Men. Pitcairn interprets



A VIEW OF THE GREEN IN LEXINGTON IN 1795

that as purposely done. His next order quickly follows :

“ G — d damn you, fire *at* them ! ”

That second volley is meant to kill, and does !

Corporal John Munroe, one of the Minute Men, recognizes the friendly intent of the first volley, and gives his impression to Ebenezer Munroe, “ Jr.,” who stands by his side. The second volley comes and wounds the latter in his arm. The stinging thud enables him to correct Corporal John Munroe’s impression, in which he is confirmed by other Minute Men, wounded, dying, and dead.

“ I’ll give them the guts of my gun,” exclaims Ebenezer Munroe, “ Jr.”

The two Munroes then deliberately return the British fire, retreat about one hundred and fifty feet, and there Corporal John Munroe re-loads his musket with two balls, and fires again. The charge is too heavy, and about a foot of the muzzle end of his musket follows the bullets. Other Minute Men pause and fire into the cloud of powder smoke between them and the Meeting House.

Parker’s little force are not all with him, or even within sound of his voice. A few are over

the walls, that bound the highways, and three are in the Meeting House for ammunition, in accordance with his orders. One of them, even now, realizing that he is almost surrounded, stands with primed musket pointing to a keg of powder which he resolves to explode, and thereby rob himself of life rather than be captured. Solomon Brown, he who scouted after the ten British officers, and who was captured by them and kindly returned to near the Common and there released, has taken a position at the back door of Buckman Tavern, and fires. For a surer aim he passes through to the front door, and fires again from there. The response from the British is immediate. Brown is not struck by the bullets, but the Tavern is. John Buckman, the landlord, a member of Parker's Company, but not in line this morning, does not care to have it riddled by British bullets, and so remonstrates with Brown, who seeks another position, behind a stone wall near the barn. From there he continues his fire. His aim is good enough to wound one of a group of British officers, for Abijah Harrington, later, shall see a pool of blood on the ground where they stood. In answer, the British return a volley or two, and their bullets, striking the stone wall,



THE BATTLE OF LEXINGTON BY PENDLETON
THE BATTLE OF LEXINGTON BY DOOLITTLE
"THE DAWN OF LIBERTY" BY SANDHAM

raise little clouds of stone dust like smoke. Brown prudently moves farther off to a safer position.

We have said that Parker's men obey his commands to retire. One does not. He is standing alone on Lexington Common, facing the British four hundred, exactly where he stood with his Captain a few moments ago, making good his oft repeated promise never to run away. His hat is on the ground between his feet, and in it is his ammunition, that it may be easily handled for its expected use. Deliberately he returns the British fire. One bullet out of their second volley coming but a short distance finds an easy mark in his body, and Jonas Parker, the grand hero of this the first battle of the American Revolution, terribly wounded, falls to the ground. His courage and spirit are not subdued, and he struggles to arise, succeeds a little, and is attempting to reload. It is a slow and painful effort. "*I will never run,*" are his last words. He does not. Several enraged foes rush forward and plunge their bayonets into his bosom. Bleeding, he dies, just where he stood in Captain Parker's first line on Lexington Common, on this April morning in the year 1775. No more heroic death ever happened in

any war or anywhere, than this of Jonas Parker. He is our greatest battle hero.

Other Americans killed are Jonathan Harrington, son of Henry, and known as "Junior," meaning the second one of that name in the neighborhood. He is mortally wounded on the northerly end of the Common. Across the road is his home. He struggles to reach it, falls, but with renewed effort rises and staggers to his own door-stone. His wife meets him there, and he dies in her arms.

Ensign Robert Munroe is killed on the edge of the Common near Merriam's barn.

Caleb Harrington, who was one of the three who went into the Meeting House for ammunition, while escaping from the westerly end, is instantly killed.

John Brown and Samuel Hadley are pursued to the swamp a little north of the Common, and there shot down.

Isaac Muzzy is the seventh in the list of slain.

Asahel Porter, one of Parker's Company, but not one of the seventy-seven in line this morning, is killed in Buckman's garden. Earlier, down the Boston Road, he was taken prisoner, and brought by the British as far as the Common.

DEATH OF JONAS PARKER. "I NEVER WILL RUN."



Being unarmed, he was here released, and cautioned to *walk*, not *run*, away. His anxiety impelled him to run, which excited the suspicion of some foeman, who halted him with a bullet. His home is in Woburn. He counts as the eighth of our slain.

The wounded are Joseph Comee, one of the three sent into the Meeting House for ammunition. Emerging from the westerly end with Harrington, he makes his way to the Marrett house across the road, passes through and out of the back door and up over the hill at the rear. On the way he is wounded in the arm.

John Robbins has two wounds, a shattered jaw bone and a badly lacerated arm. Ebenezer Munroe, "Jr.," a wound on his arm. John Tidd, a sabre cut on his head. The other wounded are Solomon Pierce, Nathaniel Farmer, Thomas Winship, Jedediah Munroe, and Prince Estabrook, colored.

The British casualties are slight, but nevertheless their blood, too, stains Lexington Common. While many of the seventy-seven Minute Men retire by order of their Captain as the four hundred Britons advance, not all can forget Parker's words:—

"If they want war let it begin here."

Being fired upon, many replied in kind. Eight of them are known, and their names shall be a part of this record. They are :

Solomon Brown, Ebenezer Lock, Ebenezer Munroe, " Jr.," Corporal John Munroe, Nathan Munroe, Jonas Parker, Lieutenant William Tidd and Benjamin Sampson. Probably there are others that belong in this list, now unknown.

No Britons are killed. One man of the Tenth Regiment is wounded in the thigh, and another in the hand. Major Pitcairn's horse is the innocent victim of two bullets, not serious enough to disable him. Probably they were meant for his rider.

The battle is ended, and besides the dead, there are now no Minute Men on the Common.

After a little time the British are again in marching order. It seems to them like their victory, so they fire a volley, and shout their huzzas. Four hundred have driven our seventy-seven from the field !

The main body, under Lieut-Col. Smith, has now come up, and Major John Pitcairn is no longer in command.

Again the shouts of command ; again the martial strains of fife and drum ; again the

tramp, tramp, tramp, of heavy feet, as they march away toward Concord Hill.

When the invaders are indeed gone our townsmen, and women, and children, come forth. The wounded are cared for, and those who have died are borne by strong and willing arms into the house of God. There they are laid side by side. The good Parson, Jonas Clarke, is also present with such words of spiritual comfort as he can administer, mingled with other words of patriotic counsel. There is comfort in his presence and strength in his words.

Five straggling British soldiers are now coming up the Boston Road, free from any warlike demonstrations. They are easily captured, and constitute the first British prisoners of the American Revolution. They are sent to the Burlington Precinct over in Woburn, where suitable quarters are available. Their arms pass into the hands of those who have immediate use for them, for surely the day of contest is not finished. The British have gone to Concord; they will return!

The cool easterly wind has driven away all of the smoke of battle. The sun is a little higher; its beams are struggling through the

leaves and branches; and the shadows on Lexington Common are growing lighter. More men, and women, and children, are gathering. The shadows in many of their hearts though, are darker, as they hasten here and there across the field, and into the Meeting House, searching for the ones who have not returned to them with the news of battle. We know of eight who cannot return, and they, too, shall soon know of them.

In this supreme moment there may be a few who recall that patriotic resolution passed in Town Meeting in the year 1773, in which we pledged ourselves to sacrifice:—

“ Everything dear in life, yea and life itself, in support of the Common Cause.”

To-day Lexington fulfills its pledge; for here in the little Meeting House, just on the edge of the Common, rest side by side seven of her sons, who have given even their lives,

“ IN SUPPORT OF THE COMMON CAUSE.”

COMPLETE ROSTER OF CAPTAIN JOHN PARKER'S COMPANY
OF 144 MEN. *Only 77 of these were in the Morning
Engagement.*

OFFICERS.

Captain, John Parker.
Lieutenant, William Tidd.
Ensign, Robert Muuroe.
Ensign, Joseph Simonds.
Clerk, Daniel Harrington.
Orderly Sergt., William Munroe.
Sergeant, Francis Brown.
Sergeant, Ebenezer White.
Corporal, Joel Viles.
Corporal, Samuel Sanderson.
Corporal, John Muuroe.
Corporal, Ebenezer Parker.
Drummer, William Diamond.
Fifer, Jonathan Harrington (son
of Jonathan).

PRIVATES.

Isaac Blodgett.
Ebenezer Bowman.
Francis Bowman.
John Bridge, Jr.
Joseph Bridge.
James Brown.
John Brown.
Solomon Brown.
John Buckman.
Eli Burdoo.
John Chandler.
John Chandler, Jr.
Abijah Child.
Joseph Comee.
Thomas Cutler.
Robert Douglass of Captain Bel-
knap's Woburn Company. In
Captain Parker's Company.
April 19.
Isaac Durant.

Prince Estabrook.
Nathaniel Farmer.
Nathan Fessenden.
Thomas Fessenden.
Dr. Joseph Fisk.
Isaac Green.
William Grimes.
Caleb Harrington.
Jeremiah Harrington.
John Harrington.
Jonathan Harrington, then call-
ed "Jr.," but son of Henry.
Jonathan Harrington, 3rd.
Moses Harrington.
Moses Harrington, 3rd.
Moses Harrington, Jr.
Thaddeus Harrington.
Thomas Harrington.
William Harrington.
Isaac Hastings.
Samuel Hastings.
Samuel Hastings, Jr.
Benjamin Hadley.
Ebenezer Hadley.
Samuel Hadley.
Thomas Hadley, Jr.
John Hosmer.
Micah Hagar.
Amos Lock.
Benjamin Lock.
Ebenezer Lock.
Reuben Lock.
Joseph Loring.
Jonathan Loring.
Amos Marrett.
Daniel Mason.
Joseph Mason.
Abner Mead.

Benjamin Merriam.	Joseph Robinson.
William Merriam.	Phillip Russell.
Asa Munroe.	Benjamin Sampson.
Ebenezer Munroe, son of Robert.	Elijah Sanderson.
Ebenezer Munroe, then called	Ebenezer Simonds.
"Jr.," but son of Jonas.	Joshua Simonds.
Edmund Munroe.	Abraham Smith.
George Munroe.	David Smith.
Jedediah Munroe.	Ebenezer Smith.
John Munroe, Jr.	Jesse Smith.
John Munroe, 2nd.	John Smith.
Nathan Munroe.	Jouathau Smith.
Philemon Munroe.	Josiah Smith.
Stephen Munroe.	Joseph Smith.
William Munroe, Jr.	Phineas Smith.
William Munroe, 3rd.	Samuel Smith.
Nathaniel Mulliken.	Thaddeus Smith.
Amos Muzzy.	William Smith.
Isaac Muzzy.	Simeou Snow.
John Muzzy.	Asahel Stearns.
Thaddeus Muzzy.	Phineas Stearns.
Jonas Parker.	Jonas Stone.
Jonas Parker, Jr.	Jonas Stone, Jr.
Thaddeus Parker.	Benjamin Tidd.
John Parkhurst.	John Tidd.
Nathaniel Parkhurst,	Samuel Tidd.
Solomon Pierce.	Joseph Underwood,
Asahel Porter.	Benjamin Wellington
Israel Porter.	Enoch Wellington.
John Raymond.	Timothy Wellington.
Hammond Reed.	John Williams.
Joshua Reed.	John Winship,
Joshua Reed, Jr.	Samuel Winship.
Josiah Reed.	Thomas Winship.
Nathan Reed.	Sylvanus Wood of Captain
Robert Reed.	Walker's Woburn Company.
Thaddeus Reed.	In Captain Parker's Company
William Reed.	April 19.
John Robbins.	James Wyman.
Thomas Robbins.	Nathan Wyman.

Names of the SEVENTY-SEVEN MEN OF CAPTAIN JOHN PARKER'S COMPANY *who were in the early morning engagement on Lexington Common, April 19, 1775.*

OFFICERS.

Captain, John Parker.
Lieutenant, William Tidd
Ensign, Robert Munroe, killed.
Ensign, Joseph Simonds.
Clerk, Daniel Harrington.
Orderly Sgt., William Munroe.
Corporal, Joel Viles.
Corporal, Samuel Sanderson.
Corporal, John Munroe.
Corporal, Ebenezer Parker. .
Drummer, William Diamond.
Fifer, Jonathan Harrington.

Moses Harrington, 3rd.
 Moses Harrington, Jr.
 Thaddeus Harrington.
 Thomas Harrington.
 Isaac Hastings.
 Samuel Hastings.
 Samuel Hadley, killed.
 Thomas Hadley, Jr.
 John Hosmer.
 Micah Hagar.
 Amos Lock.
 Benjamin Lock.
 Ebenezer Lock.
 Reuben Lock.
 Abner Mead.
 Ebenezer Munroe, Jr. (son of Jonas, but known as a "Junior" at that time); wounded.
 Jedediah Munroe, wounded.
 John Munroe, Jr.
 Nathan Munroe.
 William Munroe, 3rd.
 Nathaniel Mulliken.
 Isaac Muzzy, killed.
 John Muzzy.
 Jonas Parker, killed.
 Jonas Parker, Jr.
 Nathaniel Parkhurst.
 Solomon Pierce wounded.
 Asahel Porter, killed. Unarmed. (Had been taken prisoner, released, but shot as he was running away).
 Joshua Reed.
 Joshua Reed, Jr.
 Nathan Reed.
 John Robbins, wounded.
 Phillip Russell.
 Benjamin Sampson.

PRIVATEES.

Ebenezer Bowman.
 John Bridge, Jr.
 James Brown.
 John Brown, killed.
 Solomon Brown.
 John Chandler,
 John Chandler, Jr.
 Joseph Comee, wounded.
 Robert Douglass, of Captain Belknap's Woburn Company. Enlisted in Captain Parker's Company, April 19.
 Isaac Durant.
 Prince Estabrook, colored, wounded.
 Nathaniel Farmer, wounded.
 Isaac Green.
 William Grimes.
 Caleb Harrington, killed.
 John Harrington.
 Jonathan Harrington, "Jr.," killed, (son of Henry, but known as a "Juuior" at that time).

Joshua Simonds,	Benjamin Wellington.
John Smith.	Enoch Wellington.
Phineas Smith.	John Winship.
Simeon Snow.	Thomas Winship, wounded.
Phineas Stearns.	Sylvanus Wood, of Captain
Jonas Stone, Jr.	Walker's Woburn Company.
John Tidd, wounded.	Enlisted in Captain Parker's
Samuel Tidd.	Company, April 19.
Joseph Underwood.	James Wyman.

77 in all not counting Porter, who was not in line.

Names of the EIGHT MEN OF CAPTAIN JOHN PARKER'S
COMPANY who returned the British Fire in the early
morning engagement on Lexington Common.

<i>Lieutenant</i> William Tidd.	of Jonas, but known as a
<i>Corporal</i> John Munroe.	"Junior" at that time).
Solomon Brown.	Nathan Munroe.
Ebenezer Lock.	Jonas Parker, killed.
Ebenezer Munroe, wounded (son	Benjamin Sampson.

Lexington April 23, 1775.

I John Parker of lawful age, and commander of the militia in Lexington, do testify and declare that on the 19th inst. in the morning about nine of the clock, being informed that there were a number of Regular ~~troop~~ officers riding up & down the road, taking and insulting people and also was informed that the ~~regul~~ troops were on their march from Boston, in order to take the Provincial Store at Concord, immediately ordered our militia to meet on the common in said Lexington, to consult what to do; and concluded not to be discovered, nor ~~to~~ meddle or make with said Regular Troops (if they should approach) unless they should insult or molest us; and upon their sudden approach, I immediately ordered our militia to disperse and not to fire; ~~no further to pursue.~~
Immediately said ~~troop~~ troops made their appearance and rushed furiously to ~~the~~ said upon and killed eight of our party without receiving any provocation therefor from us. John Parker

Midd^{le}sex April 23, 1775

The above named John Parker appeared and made solemn oath to the truth of the within deposition by him subscribed before us.

John Cummins
Jos: Hastings
Samuel Juggals

Justices of Peace

FICTION AND TRUTH
ABOUT THE
BATTLE
ON
LEXINGTON COMMON

APRIL 19, 1775

BY

BY FRANK WARREN COBURN

A PAPER READ BEFORE THE
LEXINGTON HISTORICAL SOCIETY
TUESDAY EVENING, DECEMBER 12, 1916

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THE JOURNALS OF EACH PROVINCIAL CONGRESS OF MASSACHUSETTS IN 1774 AND 1775, [etc.,] AND OTHER DOCUMENTS. PUBLISHED AGREEABLY TO A RESOLVE PASSED MARCH 10, 1837. BOSTON, 1838.

Containing the Journals of each of the three Congresses ; Narrative of the Excursion of the King's Troops April 19, 1775 ; the fifteen Depositions herein cited ; the Letter of Gov. Jonathan Trumbull of Conn., to His Excellency Thomas Gage ; the latter's Reply ; the British Official Account.

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Containing the Narrative of Paul Revere reproduced in fac-simile.

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Prefatory.

The many historical accounts of the battle of Lexington are founded upon the Narrative and Depositions of the Second Provincial Congress; on those gathered by other hands; on the testimony of eyewitnesses; and on the British official reports.

These are sadly at variance with each other.

Unfortunately the group that Americans naturally turn to, those of the Second Provincial Congress, fail to inspire in the breasts of Lexingtonians, any feelings of patriotic fervor.

They are insufficient; they are misleading; they suppress a portion of the truth; and therefore the impression they convey is a false one.

Because of the standing of Congress as the highest American authority many writers have accepted that report as conclusive.

There are two accounts of the battle that this Society delights to honor, one by Elias Phinney, published in 1825, and another by Charles Hudson, in his excellent History of Lexington, published in 1868.

Neither relied entirely upon the official account of the Second Congress.

In grateful remembrance of their work, so far as I may, I dedicate this hour.

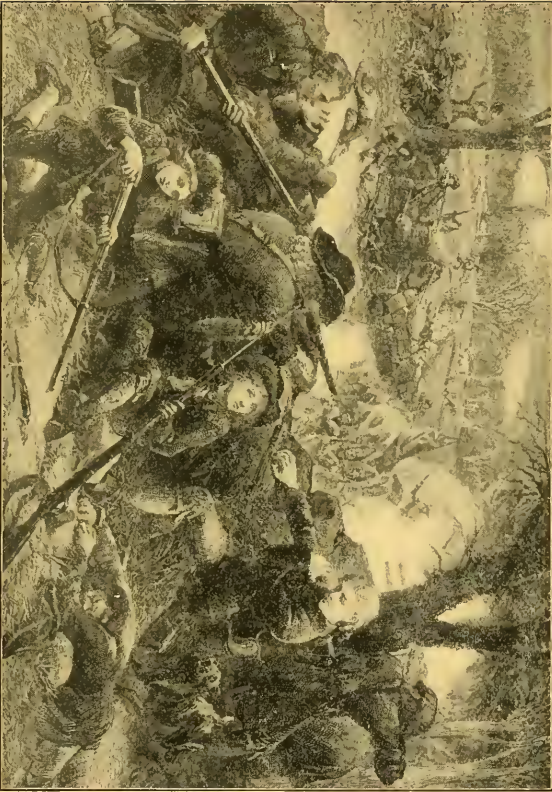
When our energetic president came to me a few months ago and requested a paper upon our favorite topic, I was obliged to confess that I had no new or strange offering. With his permission and approval I agreed to arrange all of the very old material in such form that we might judge candidly, by comparison, of its true value.

I therefore invite your attention to a brief synopsis of all of the American and British official accounts, and of all of the testimony of witnesses.

Bear in mind that it is not my aim to advance a theory and support it by a partial presentation of testimony.

You will find in these witnesses which I summon, repetitions, contradictions, inconsistencies.

I present them all without apology. It shall be your privilege to separate the wheat from the chaff,—the Fiction from the Truth.



THE BATTLE OF LEXINGTON BY JOHN S. DAVIS

Fiction and Truth About the Battle on Lexington Common.

The battle on Lexington Common was fought one hundred and forty-one years ago.

From that time until today historical writers have been seriously misled by the first American official account of that event.

On that morning the few men who stood facing the king's soldiers were loyal subjects. They had their grievances, but within them still burned a faith, that somehow,—sometime,—not too far away, their prayers for redress would be listened to and answered.

After that fatal second volley Captain Parker's men were indeed rebels.

When the smoke of battle had cleared away, when their vengeance had been fully wreaked upon the invaders, many of them,—not all,—listened to the calmer counsel of their Congress, whose plea seemed to be for peace,—peace, but with justice and honor.

Such an adjustment could be reached only by placing the martyrs' wreath upon the graves of

Lexington's slain. It was the immediate purpose of the Congress to do exactly that.

Accordingly on April 22, three days after the battle, a committee of nine was appointed by the Congress to gather depositions of participants and spectators, and on the next day, April 23, a committee of three was appointed to prepare a Narrative of the Excursions of the King's Soldiers to accompany those depositions.

Dr. Church, Mr. Gerry, and Mr. Cushing constituted that committee.

The Narrative and Depositions were published in the following month of May, by Isaiah Thomas, at Worcester.

I find no serious departure from the truth, either in Narrative or Depositions, except as they fall far short of the *whole* truth,—and thus mislead and hide from our view the complete battle scene, with the result that erroneous conclusions have been drawn and may still be drawn.

What was the motive of Congress in publishing this misleading report?

Simply this: reconciliation was hoped for and expected, and it could easier be obtained by minimizing the offence of the colonists, and magnifying the offence of the king's soldiers!

Fortunately all of Parker's command were not willing to co-operate in the plan of Congress, so

their signatures do not appear beneath those depositions. Years afterward, however, some were gathered by other hands, and thus we have the more finished story.

It is my purpose in this essay to analyze *all* of the first ones, and to place with them four others, gathered many years afterwards, that seem to belong to that side of the controversy.

In opposition to those I propose to also give an analysis of *all other* depositions and narratives of participants and eyewitnesses, together with the British official accounts, that we may see clearly the real happenings of that brief half hour.

First, let us consider briefly the civil authority under which the provincial military forces were acting.

Who constituted the First Provincial Congress of Massachusetts?

The Royal Governor, Gen. Thomas Gage, had issued his writs on Sept. 1st, 1774, calling upon the inhabitants to return representatives to the Great and General Court, to be convened at Salem, Oct. 5, but, between those dates, becoming alarmed at the extraordinary resolves passed by some of the County Conventions, and instructions given by Boston and some other towns to their representatives, thought the time was not

auspicious for such a gathering. Therefore, he issued a proclamation countermanding his first call.

However, ninety elected representatives met, on Oct. 5, at Salem, and awaited the Governor—who failed to appear.

They adjourned to the next day, Oct. 6th, and then met as a Convention, and chose John Hancock, Chairman, after which they adjourned until the next day, Oct. 7, when they met again, and then declared themselves to be a Provincial Congress.

John Hancock was chosen Permanent Chairman.

Thus the First Provincial Congress was made over by themselves, from the duly elected members of the Great and General Court, which would have recognized Gen. Gage as their royal Governor, into a self constituted legislative body, whose whole legislative work was to be in direct antagonism to him, and to the English Parliament.

They were dissolved by their own vote Dec. 10, 1774.

The Second Provincial Congress was practically a direct representative gathering of the people.

They convened at Cambridge, Feb. 1, 1775, and dissolved May 29, following.

The Third Provincial Congress, also elected by the people, convened at Watertown, May 31, and dissolved July 19, 1775.

On July 20, 1775, the succeeding General Court of Massachusetts, consisting of a Council and a House of Representatives, enacted that all and every of the Resolves of the Provincial Congresses, from Oct. 4, 1774, to July 20, 1775, be confirmed and established as lawful and valid, thus legalizing all of the Acts of their predecessors.

The official Narrative of the battle which we are to consider, was the work of the Second Provincial Congress.

The Proclamation issued by the Third Provincial Congress, June 16, 1775, we shall also briefly consider, because of its variance from the Narrative.

Almost every vote of the First and Second Congresses was in preparation for a defensive war. The sessions were behind closed doors and those votes were in secret. Openly they frequently pledged their loyalty to their governor, their king, and their mother country, expressions that we must look upon as insincere, in fact, merely as measures of diplomacy.

For instance, on Oct. 29, 1774, the First Provincial Congress appointed a Committee to present a communication to his Excellency, Governor Gage, which contained this sentence:—

“We trust, sir, that we shall not fail in our duty to our country and loyalty to our king, or in a proper respect to your excellency.”*

Yet every session bristled with rebellious activity.

The Second Provincial Congress, in an address to the Inhabitants of Great Britain, dated April 26, 1775, and speaking of the ravages of the King's troops on the 19th of April, affirmed their continued loyalty nevertheless, in these words:—

“We profess to be his loyal and dutiful subjects, and so hardly dealt with as we have been, are still ready, with our lives and fortunes, to defend his person, family, crown and dignity.”

And yet nearly 4,000 minute men had mustered on the previous 19th of April to oppose their sovereign's troops.

We must look upon the Narrative of the Excursions of the King's Troops, promulgated

*Journals of Each Provincial Congress, page 45.

by the Second Congress, as a part of the diplomatic history of that Congress.

The opening sentence shows conclusively that the Congress did not yet wish to be considered as rebels, for it accuses the King's troops of shedding: "the blood of sundry of the loyal American subjects of the British king in the field of Lexington."

It continues by reciting how a detachment of about 900 men, under Lieutenant-Colonel Smith, attacked a small party of about 100 inhabitants of Lexington and other adjacent towns, some with and some without firearms.

The detachment were proceeding on their way at a brisk pace towards Concord, as the inhabitants supposed, to take or destroy a quantity of stores deposited there, for the use of the Colony.

The inhabitants were far from being disposed to commence hostilities against the troops of their sovereign, and unless attacked were determined to be peaceful spectators of this extraordinary movement.

On the approach of Col. Smith with the detachment under his command they dispersed, but the detachment, seeming to thirst for blood, wantonly rushed on and killed eight on

the spot and wounded several others, before any guns were fired by our men.

Not contented with this effusion of blood, as if malice had occupied their whole souls, they continued the fire until all of the small party who escaped the dismal carnage were out of reach.

Colonel Smith then proceeded to Concord.

The Depositions were fashioned to support the Narrative.

The Committee appointed to take them were not looking for the entire truth, but only that portion of it which could be fashioned in support of their accusations against the King's soldiers.

Deposition of Solomon Brown, Jonathan Loring, and Elijah Sanderson, Jointly, Dated April 25.

They have nothing to say as to the action on the Common, but tell of being detained and abused by the British officers the night before, and on that morning.

Solomon Brown could have told an interesting story, but it was not required.

Deposition of Elijah Sanderson.

The next deposition is by the same Elijah



THE BATTLE OF LEXINGTON, ENGRAVED BY J. WELLS

Sanderson, separately, who swore April 25, that he saw the regular troops advancing towards the Lexington Company, "many of whom were then dispersing," and that he heard one officer say, "damn them—we will have them;" that the regulars shouted aloud, run and fired on the Lexington Company, "which did not fire a gun before the regulars discharged on them."

"Eight of the Lexington Company were killed while they were dispersing."

Deposition of Thomas Rice Willard.

Thomas Rice Willard, in his deposition of April 23, states that he was in the Daniel Harrington house, and on looking out of the window saw the regulars approach the minute men within eight or nine rods, at which time the militia dispersed, and that an officer hollowed after them to lay down their arms; and "that there was not a gun fired till the militia of Lexington were dispersed."

Deposition of Simon Winship.

The next deposition is that of Simon Winship, dated April 25, who was taken prisoner

by the British earlier in the morning, and was with them as they came to the Common.

When within an eighth of a mile of the meeting house the commander ordered the troops to halt and load. Then they marched on, and when within a few rods of Parker's Company, saw an officer at the head of said troops flourishing his sword, and heard him, in a loud voice, give the order to fire. He concluded his deposition by saying that there was no discharge of arms on either side until that order to fire.

Deposition of Captain John Parker.

Captain John Parker's deposition comes next, and is dated April 25.* He ordered, and I quote his own words, "our militia to meet on the common in said Lexington, to consult what to do, and concluded not to be discovered, nor meddle, or make with said regular troops, if they should approach, unless they should insult or molest us; and upon their sudden approach I immediately ordered our militia to disperse, and not to fire. Immediately said troops made their appearance, and

*April 23, in fac-simile in Hudson's Lexington, I, 218. There are other slight differences between his two depositions but not materially changing his meaning.

rushing furiously on fired upon and killed eight of our party without receiving any provocation therefor from us."

The Captain said nothing of a return fire. Taken altogether, his deposition is the most unfortunate one of all for us to consider.

I cannot reconcile his statement with his action. He said they "concluded not to be discovered," yet it is well known and accepted by all that his first order on learning of the British approach, was for Dimond to sound the alarm upon his drum,—which Pitcairn accepted as a challenge. Parker quickly followed it with other orders to his company to load with powder and ball, and to form for action practically across the British path.

Deposition of John Robbins.

The deposition of John Robbins, dated April 24, is next.

He testified that he was in the front ranks of Parker's Company when there suddenly appeared about a thousand of the King's troops, as he thought, at a distance of sixty or seventy yards. Three officers on horseback were in front, the foremost of whom cried: "throw down your arms! ye villains! ye rebels!"

Upon which the Company dispersing, that

foremost officer gave the order to fire. Robbins was wounded and fell, and several of our men by his side were shot dead.

Parker's men, he believed, had not then fired a shot.

Deposition of Benjamin Tidd and Joseph Abbott.

Benjamin Tidd, of Lexington, and Joseph Abbott, of Lincoln, unite in a deposition under date of April 25.

They were mounted on horses, and were on the Common as spectators, when the regulars marched up to the Lexington Company, which was then dispersing. Soon after, the regulars fired, first a few guns, which Tidd and Abbott took to be pistols, then a volley or two, before any guns were fired by the Lexington Company.

Deposition of Nathaniel Mulliken and Thirty-three Others.

Nathaniel Mulliken and thirty-three others unite in one deposition, dated April 25.

They admit having been alarmed, and in consequence, of meeting at the place of the Company's parade, meaning on the Common,

and were dismissed by the Captain for the time.

About five o'clock, hearing the drum beat, they proceeded towards the parade, and found that a large body of troops were marching towards them. Some of the Company had reached the parade, and some were coming, at which time the Company began to disperse.

"Whilst our backs were turned on the troops, we were fired on by them, and a number of our men instantly killed and wounded. Not a gun was fired by any person in our company on the regulars, to our knowledge, before they fired on us."

Deposition of Nathaniel Parkhurst and Thirteen Others.

Nathaniel Parkhurst and thirteen others unite in a deposition dated April 25.

They testify that at the drum beat, they attended, and formed on the parade, faced towards the regulars. Some of the Company were coming to the parade, with their backs towards the troops, and others on the parade began to disperse, when the regulars fired—before a gun was fired by any of Parker's Company.

Deposition of Timothy Smith.

Timothy Smith, whose deposition was dated April 25, testified that he was on the Common as a spectator.

He saw a large body of troops marching towards the Lexington Company,—then dispersing,—and likewise saw the regular troops fire,—before the Lexington Company fired a gun.

Deposition of Levi Mead and Levi Harrington.

Levi Mead and Levi Harrington unite in a deposition, dated April 25, to the effect that they were on the Common as spectators, and saw the regular troops marching towards the Lexington Company. Some were on horseback, whom they took to be officers, who fired a pistol or two on the Lexington Company, which was then dispersing, and those were the first guns that were fired.

Nothing said of any return fire.

Deposition of William Draper.

William Draper, probably as a spectator, and whose deposition was taken April 25, testified that the regulars appeared at the meeting house, and that Parker's Company, which was drawn

up back of said meeting house, turned from said troops and made their escape by dispersing.

The regular troops "made an huzza," ran towards Parker's Company, and immediately after the commanding officer of said troops, as Draper took him to be, gave the order to fire, and they did fire, before any of Parker's Company fired.

Deposition of Thomas Fessenden.

Thomas Fessenden swore, April 23, that he was in a pasture near the meeting house when he saw the regular troops pass the meeting house on their way towards the Lexington militia. He saw three officers on horseback advance to the front of said regulars. One of them, when within six rods of the militia, cried out: "disperse you rebels immediately," on which he brandished his sword three times. The second officer, about two rods behind, fired a pistol pointed at the militia. The regulars huzzaed until the officer finished brandishing his sword, and when he had finished brandishing his sword, he pointed it at the militia,—and immediately the regulars fired.

Fessenden further testified that as soon as the officer cried: "disperse, you rebels," the said company of militia dispersed every way as

fast as they could, "and while they were dispersing, the regulars kept firing at them incessantly."

Fessenden said nothing of a return fire.

Deposition of John Bateman.

John Bateman belonged to the 52nd Regiment of the British. He swore, on April 23, that he was with the party marching to Concord.

At Lexington there was a small party of men gathered, and he heard the word of command given to the troops to fire,—and some of said troops did fire,—and he saw one of said party lie dead on the ground nigh said meeting house.

And he further testified that he never heard, to use his own words: "any of the inhabitants so much as fire one gun on said troops."

Deposition of Lieutenant Edward Thornton Gould.

Lieutenant Edward Thornton Gould, of his Majesty's own regiment, under date of April 20, swore that he embarked with the forces under Colonel Smith on the evening of the 18th, landed on the marshes at Cambridge, and proceeded to Lexington. On arrival at that place they saw a body of provincial troops, armed, to the number of about sixty or seventy men.



JOURNÉE DE LEXINGTON PAR F. GODEFRAY

“On our approach, they dispersed, and soon after firing began, but which party fired first I cannot exactly say, as our troops rushed on, shouting and huzzaing, previous to the firing, which was continued by our troops so long as any of the provincials were to be seen.”

So much for the fifteen Depositions that accompany the Narrative.

To those were signed sixty-four names, all participants or eyewitnesses, most of them of Parker's Company.

In all of the Depositions there is not a positive statement that any of Parker's Company returned the fire at all, though in nine out of fifteen it is hinted at in that left-handed sentence that *no man in Parker's Company fired, until he was fired upon!*

We are left to conjecture whether he did *then* or not.

Are there any omissions of names that we might expect to find there?

Yes!

In Parker's Company were more than a dozen Munroes; but only two, John, Jr., and William, 3rd., can be found subscribed to the Depositions!

Why?

Jedidiah was wounded on the Common in the morning; and his patriotic spirit, not having been

subdued, continued until he was killed in the afternoon.

Ensign Robert was among those who were slain.

Ebenezer, Jr., and John stood side by side through the first and second volleys, and then dispersing, deliberately fired back. Ebenezer had been wounded, and his return fire was his answer to the British bullet.

John, son of Ensign Robert, might have seen his father fall, for not many paces could have separated them, ere he sent back that second double leaden answer.

Those two Munroes were certainly conspicuous in their enmity to the king's soldiers, and their signatures would not have been a graceful addition to the Depositions of the Provincial Congress.

Concede to the others bearing that family name, the well-known family traits, and we are not mystified because they were not enrolled with the sixty-four, under Dr. Church's banner.

There were other names that the Provincial Congress would have been glad to add to their peace document, but they were not available.

Years after, some of them subscribed to an-

other set of Depositions, which we shall soon contrast with those of 1775.

As we finish considering the official report of the Provincial Congress, let us pay our respects to the chairman of the Narrative part.

Dr. Benjamin Church was a part of Boston's contribution to the Congress. By reputation he was a man of sterling patriotism, enthusiastic in the duties assigned to him,—effective in their accomplishment.

Secretly he was in sympathy with the mother country. In the following November cipher letters of his were intercepted by Elbridge Gerry, and it was found that he had been in correspondence with the enemy.

He was condemned by the Massachusetts Legislature, for treason, and sentenced to imprisonment for life. His health failing, he was allowed to leave the country. He embarked for the West Indies, but the ship on which he sailed was never again heard of.

Just to what extent Dr. Church dominated the Narrative and Depositions committees, we cannot determine; but the tragic ending of his political career casts its dark shadows backwards to Lexington Common.

The Ezra Ripley Depositions.

I will add to those fifteen Depositions four

more, valuable in some respects, but so much in sympathy with the idea that Parker's men dispersed immediately upon Pitcairn's request, and without firing hardly a gun in response, that they should be a part of the same group.

Those four were probably the last sworn statements of survivors ever taken. They first appeared in the History of the Concord Fight, by Rev. Ezra Ripley, with the assistance of some other citizens of Concord, and published in 1827. Mr. Ripley's pamphlet was intended to be a reply to the one by Elias Phinney, and it was his evident ambition to place the commencement of the American Revolution at the Concord North Bridge.

In the back part of his pamphlet he published, in whole or in part, eight of the depositions of 1775, including the one by Captain John Parker, and the four new ones, which he or some of his assistants, had gathered for that particular use.

The new ones were by John Richardson, Samuel Hartwell, Robert Douglass and Sylvanus Wood.

Deposition of John Richardson.

John Richardson, of Newton, under date of June 25, 1827, swore that he was at Lexington

on the 19th of April. He did not claim that he was present in the morning.

No mention was made in his hearing of the Americans having fired upon the British on that morning; that those events were a constant topic of conversation for a long time after; that he never heard that any individual in Parker's Company had fired upon the British "until the visit of Gen. Lafayette to this country in 1825, with the exception of one gun, which was said to have been fired by Solomon Brown, while standing in the back kitchen, of the tavern, then owned by Buckman, now Meriam."

Deposition of Samuel Hartwell.

Samuel Hartwell, of Lincoln, in a deposition taken July 19, 1827, swore that he had been acquainted with the inhabitants of Lexington, and particularly with many who were of Captain Parker's Company on the 19th of April, 1775, and did not recollect that any of the people of Lexington ever stated that there was any firing by Parker's Company, "until within a few years, except the firing of one gun, after the British had turned and were passing off the Common."

Deposition of Robert Douglass.

Robert Douglass, of Portland, Me., under date of May 3, 1827, swore that he was at his father's house, in Woburn, on the morning of April 19, and about an hour before daybreak a man rode up and knocked loudly at the door, and announced the coming out of the British, and that he must turn out and repair to Lexington.

He joined Sylvanus Wood, and they went to Lexington together, arriving there half an hour before sunrise.

He heard Parker order his drummers to beat to arms. He paraded with the Lexington Company, and marched to the Common, near the Bedford road, where they were ordered to load their guns.

Some one said:—

“There are so few of us it would be folly to stand here.”

Parker replied:—

“The first man who offers to run shall be shot down.”

The British came in sight, gave three cheers, and ran towards the Lexington Company, who began to break on the left wing, and ran off, and were soon dispersed.

No one of Parker's Company fired on the British, to his knowledge, said Douglass. He further stated that he knew but two men of the Lexington Company, and that he never heard any person say that the Americans fired on the British that morning.

Deposition of Sylvanus Wood.

Sylvanus Wood, of Woburn, swore June 17, 1826, that he was alarmed by the ringing of the bell, presumably on Lexington Common, about an hour before daybreak, on the morning of the 19th.

He was then in Woburn, about three miles away.

He and a companion soon reached the Common, and found Captain Parker and others, already assembled.

Parker begged the two to join his Company, and they did, taking their places in line, at once.

The British soon appeared, and the commander ordered the Lexington Company to lay down their arms and disperse, and gave the order to fire.

Wood thought that only powder had been used, for no one was hurt. Just then, he said, Parker ordered every man to take care of himself.

Not a gun was fired by any of Parker's Company, within his knowledge.

While they were dispersing the second platoon fired and killed some of our men.

One man told him some years afterwards, that while the company was dispersing, he had given them the "guts of his gun."

Wood did not name the man, but that expression has been credited to Ebenezer Munroe, Jr.

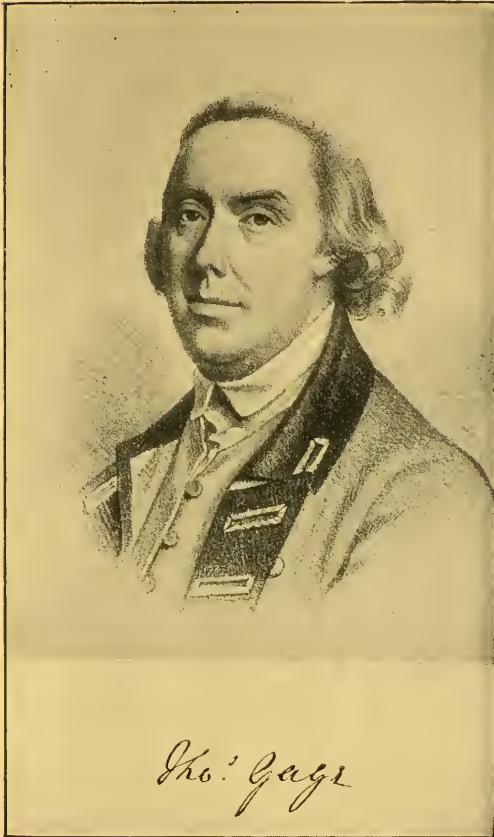
Both Douglass and Wood actually knew so little of the happenings after the second volley, that it is safe to conclude they lost no time in accepting Pitcairn's suggestion to "disperse."

So much for Mr. Ripley's contribution to our historical literature.

Testimony of Paul Revere.

Paul Revere wrote an interesting account of his celebrated ride; and as he saw and heard just a little of that opening scene, which he included in that account, I will give it a place here.

After he had been released by the British officers, not far from the Common, he sought out Hancock and Adams, and accompanied them for about two miles in their flight. He and another man then returned to the Buck-



Tho: Gage

GEN. THOMAS GAGE

man Tavern to rescue a trunk of papers belonging to Hancock.

Looking out of the chamber window they saw the ministerial troops approaching and made haste to escape. They passed through Parker's Company, who were on the Common, and heard the commanding officer (meaning Parker) speak to his men to this purpose, and I quote Revere's words exactly, as his quotation of Parker's:—

“Lett the troops pass by, & don't molest them with out The begin first.”

He had not got half gun shot off when the troops appeared in sight. They made a short halt, when one gun was fired. Revere heard the report, turned his head, and saw the smoke in front of the troops, who then gave a great shout, ran a few paces,—and then the whole fired; first irregular firing, then by platoons.

He could not then see our militia, for they were covered from him by a house.*

Testimony of Rev. Jonas Clarke.

Rev. Jonas Clarke, pastor of the Church in Lexington, delivered a sermon April 19, 1776,

*Goss's Life of Paul Revere, page 220.

to commemorate the Commencement of Hostilities, to which he added a Narrative of the Principal Transactions of the Day. A valuable account, but presumably mostly hearsay, so not appropriate for consideration here.

I am glad to use, however, two sentences referring to what he actually saw:—

“After the militia company were dispersed and the firing ceased, the troops drew up and formed in a body, on the Common, fired a volley and gave three huzzas, by way of triumph, and as expressive of the joy of victory and glory of conquest!—!—Of this transaction, I was a witness, having, at that time, a fair view of their motions, and being at the distance of not more than 70 or 80 rods from them.”

Upon the foregoing, excepting the testimony of Paul Revere and the Rev. Jonas Clarke, are based all of the historical accounts, that do but scant justice to Parker's command.

The grave fault lies, not so much with the historian and the orator, who have used that material, as it does with the committees that prepared it, and the Congress that published it.

Fortunately for the military history of our

town, there is a good treasury of better material, to which I invite your attention.

Official Report of Lieut.-Col. F. Smith.

The commander of the first detachment of the King's troops was Lieut.-Col. F. Smith.

His official report, addressed to Governor Gage, dated at Boston, April 22, relates clearly his mission to proceed to Concord, and destroy the ammunition, artillery, tents, etc., collected there;—of the utmost expedition and secrecy of his march;—of the country's intelligence and suspicion of his coming;—and of the signal guns and alarm bells along the way.

He speaks of detaching six light companies ahead, to seize the two Concord bridges; and of their arrival at Lexington, which part I will quote in his own language:—

“I understand from the report of Major Pitcairn, who was with them, and from many officers, that they found on a green close to the road, a body of the country people, drawn up in military order, with arms and accoutrements, and, as appeared after, loaded; and that they had posted some men in a dwelling and Meeting-house. Our troops advanced towards them, without any intention of injuring

them, further than to inquire the reason of their being thus assembled, and if not satisfactory to have secured their arms; but they in confusion went off, principally to the left, only one of them fired before he went off, and three or four more jumped over a wall and fired from behind it among the soldiers; on which the troops returned it and killed several of them. They likewise fired on the soldiers from the Meeting and dwelling-houses. We had one man wounded and Major Pitcairn's horse shot in two places. Rather earlier than this, on the road, a countryman from behind a wall had snapped his piece at Lieutenants Adair and Sutherland, but it flashed and did not go off."

Lieut.-Col. Smith's report for the entire expedition is equally as interesting and valuable, and not particularly unfair in any part of it.

He signed it:—

"F. Smith, Lieutenant-Colonel 10th Foot."

Major Pitcairn's Version.

Richard Frothingham, Jr., in his History of the Siege of Boston, second edition, quotes Stiles, in his manuscript diary, as to Pitcairn's version of the beginning of the firing:—

“Ezra Stiles, D.D., President of Yale College, in his Diary, under date of 1775, August 19—says: ‘Major Pitcairn, who was a good man in a bad cause, insisted upon it, to the day of his death, that the colonists fired first; and that he commanded not to fire, and endeavored to stay and stop the firing after it began: but then he told this with such circumstances as convince me that he was deceived, though on the spot. He does not say that he saw the colonists fire first. Had he said it, I would have believed him, being a man of integrity and honor. He expressly says he did not see who fired first; and yet believed the peasants began. His account is this: That riding up to them, he ordered them to disperse; which they not doing instantly, he turned about to order his troops to draw out so as to surround and disarm them. As he turned, he saw a gun in a peasant’s hand, from behind a wall, flash in the pan without going off; and instantly, or very soon, two or three guns went off, by which he found his horse wounded, and also a man near him wounded. These guns he did not see; but believing they could not come from his own people, doubted not,

*Ezra Stiles, D.D., LL.D., graduate, tutor, president of Yale. See Harper’s Cyclopedia of U. S. History. F. W. C.

and so asserted, that they came from our people, and that thus they began the attack. The impetuosity of the king's troops was such, that a promiscuous, uncommanded, but general fire took place, which Pitcairn could not prevent; though he struck his staff or sword downwards with all earnestness, as the signal to forbear or cease firing.' ”

Governor Gage's Version.

Under date of April 28, 1775, Jonathan Trumbull, Governor of Connecticut, addressed a letter to His Excellency, Thomas Gage, in which he admitted he was not sure of every part of his information, but by the best intelligence they had, the late transaction was a most unprovoked attack upon the lives and property of his majesty's subjects. He assured him that the people of that Colony abhorred the idea of taking up arms against the troops of their sovereign,—but were most firmly resolved to defend their rights and privileges to the last extremity.

He concluded, by asking if there was no way to prevent the unhappy dispute from coming to extremes?

Governor Gage replied from Boston under date of May 3, in a lengthy letter, in which he assured Governor Trumbull that the information

he had received as to the late excursion of the Troops was altogether injurious and contrary to the facts; and for his better information he enclosed a narrative of that affair taken from gentlemen of indisputable honor and veracity, who were eye witnesses of all the transactions of the day.

The official account by Governor Gage covers the entire excursion, as does the report of Lt. Col. Smith, but I will only consider the few sentences that are applicable to Lexington Common.

It is stated that Lt. Col. Smith first called his officers together, and gave orders that the troops should not fire unless fired upon.

After marching a few miles Major Pitcairn and six companies of light infantry were detached to take possession of the two bridges on the other side of Concord.

Within two miles of Lexington intelligence was received that about 500 men in arms were assembled to oppose the king's troops.

Major Pitcairn, galloping up to the head of the advance companies, was informed by two officers, that a man advanced from those that were assembled, presented his musket, and attempted to shoot them, but the piece flashed in the pan.

When they arrived at the end of the village

they observed about two hundred armed men, drawn up on a green, and when the troops came within one hundred yards of them, they began to file off towards some stone walls on their right flank.

The light infantry, observing this, ran after them.

The Major instantly called to the soldiers not to fire, but to surround and disarm them. Some who had jumped over the wall, fired four or five shots at the troops, wounded a man of the 10th Regiment, and the Major's horse in two places, and at the same time several shots were fired from a meeting house on the left. Then, without order or regularity, the light infantry began a scattered fire, and killed several of the country people, but were silenced as soon as the authority of their officers could make them.

The account concludes with this sentence:—

“Thus this unfortunate affair has happened through the rashness and imprudence of a few people, who began firing on the troops at Lexington.”*

Ensign De Bernicre's Version.

Early in the year Gen. Gage had sent Ensign De Bernicre on a spying expedition for the

*Journals of Each Provincial Congress, pages 180 and 679.



THE BATTLE OF LEXINGTON BY ALONZO CHAPPEL.

purpose of discovering the location and amount of military stores in and around Concord and other places.

He accompanied the troops on their expedition as guide, and has left an interesting account of his experiences and observations on that day.

I will quote that part which tells of Lexington Common:

“The troops received no interruption in their march until they arrived at Lexington, a town eleven miles from Boston, where there were about 150 rebels drawn out in divisions, with intervals as wide as the front of the divisions; the light infantry who marched in front halted, and Major Pitcairn came up immediately and cried out to the rebels to throw down their arms and disperse, which they did not do; he called out a second time but to no purpose; upon which he ordered our light infantry to advance and disarm them, which they were doing, when one of the rebels fired a shot, our soldiers returned the fire and killed about fourteen of them; there was only one of the 10th light infantry received a shot through his leg; some of them got into the church and fired from it, and were soon drove out. We then continued our march to Concord.”

A British Officer's Version.

The Diary of a British Officer in Boston in 1775 was published in the Atlantic Monthly in April and May, 1877. It was furnished by R. H. Dana, Jr., who, in an editorial introduction, confessed that he did not know who was the author, but careful investigation had resulted in determining that it was either Lieut. Peregrine Francis Thorne, or Lieut. David Hamilton, both in the King's Own Regiment.*

The writer of the Diary was in the expedition to Lexington, and speaks of reaching there at 5 o'clock, where he, to quote his own words:—
“saw a number of People, I believe between 2 and 300, formed in a Common in the middle of the Town; we still continued advancing, keeping prepared against an attack, tho' without intending to attack them; but on our coming near them they fired one or two shots, upon which our Men without any orders rushed in upon them, fired and put 'em to flight; several of them were killed, we cou'd not tell how many, because they were got behind Walls and into the Woods. We had a Man of the 10th light Infantry wounded, nobody else hurt.

*The editor of the new edition of Hudson's History of Lexington names him Lieutenant Barker. Vol. I, page 155.

We then formed on the Common, but with some difficulty, the Men were so wild they cou'd hear no orders; we waited a considerable time there, and at length proceeded on our way to Concord."

Statement by the Third Provincial Congress.

The Third Provincial Congress opened at Watertown, May 31.

On June 16, less than two months after the battle, and but twenty-two days after the publication of the Narrative and Depositions, it issued a Proclamation to the People.

It contained no claim of loyalty to the King, for it was intended more particularly for American readers, a great majority of whom would not care to be longer classed as loyalists. It did not quite advocate colonial independence,—but love of the mother country was not professed.

Speaking of the scene on Lexington Common, it recited how eight men had been cruelly murdered, and then continued,—and I quote the exact language:—

"The fire was returned by some of the survivors, but their number was too inconsiderable to annoy the regular troops." * * *

And a little further along it reads:—

"This action of the troops destroyed every

hope of coming to any accommodation with them."

Thus it was officially recognized, by the highest civil authority, that out of Parker's sixty or seventy men, there were indeed *some* who had the courage to return the fire of Pitcairn's four hundred, a statement the previous Congress lacked the courage to express.

Testimony of Levi Harrington.

Daniel Harrington was the Clerk of Parker's Company, and stood in line on the Common that morning.

His son, Levi Harrington, then a youth in his fifteenth year, was a spectator of that thrilling scene. He lived until 1846, and a few months before his death gave to his son, Bowen Harrington, his recollections of the action.

That manuscript is now in the possession of some of his descendants, and I have been permitted to copy it.

He speaks of the mortal wounding of Jonas Parker by a ball passing through his body, and tells how he had placed his hat and ammunition on the ground between his feet, and fired at the British as they approached; how it exhausted the little remaining strength he had, and so he

sank upon his knees. While in that position Parker attempted to load and fire again, but the Grenadiers reached him and put an end to his life with their bayonets.

Levi Harrington died in his 86th year. Had he lived to be a hundred, I doubt if that scene would have slipped from his memory.

Depositions Taken for the History of the Battle by Elias Phinney.

On Dec. 13, 1824, the Town of Lexington appointed a committee to collect and publish any reliable data as to the battle that might be found.

That committee consisted of nine members, and included Elias Phinney, who acted as the historian.

His book was first published in 1825.

Among the valuable facts which they assembled were the depositions of ten men, eight of whom were of Captain Parker's Company, and six of those were in line on that April morning. The others were spectators, or on the field during the day.

Those depositions were taken in 1824 and 1825, about fifty years after the battle; therefore the deponents had grown into old age.

As we look over that list of names, containing as it does some of the most substantial in the Revolutionary history of our town, I hardly think we shall be justified in questioning their memory or their mentality.

When one who has reached his three score years and ten can look back to his early youth—to some particular day,—to some particular hour,—*to some particular moment*,—when he stood before a line of blazing muskets, aimed to kill,—*aimed to kill him*,—such a scene can never be effaced from his memory.

He *may* forget trivial events of a dozen years ago, or even of yesterday; but he will ever remember the wounded and bleeding companion at his side,—the slain one at his feet!

Deposition of James Reed.

Of those ten depositions, that of James Reed, Jan. 19, 1825, is of the least value to us in the present consideration, for he tells only of the British prisoners captured soon after the regulars had left for Concord.

Deposition of Abijah Harrington.

Abijah Harrington, on April 4, 1825, swore that he heard the firing in the morning, and that

soon after the troops left he went up to the meeting house, and to the spot where they stood when they fired on our men, and that he distinctly saw blood on the ground, which was a little descending, and that it had run along the road six or eight feet. He also swore that a day or two after, he was talking with Solomon Brown of the blood he had seen in the road, and that Brown told him it was where the regulars stood when he fired at them, and he must have hit some of them.

Harrington was then between fourteen and fifteen years of age.

Deposition of Amos Lock.

Amos Lock swore, on Dec. 29, 1824, that he and Ebenezer Lock responded to the ringing of the bell, and on reaching the meeting house found the militia collecting. Shortly after, some person came up the road and reported that no regulars were coming, so they concluded to return to their families.

They had not proceeded far before they heard firing, and immediately returned.

Under cover of a wall they found Porter, about twenty rods from where the British then were, shot through the body, upon which Ebenezer Lock took aim and fired at the British.

Deposition of Elijah Sanderson.

Elijah Sanderson's deposition of April 25, 1775, was used by the Provincial Congress, and, of course, contained nothing as to the heroism of Captain Parker's men.

However, he was induced to try again, in a very much more detailed statement, on Dec. 17, 1824.

He belonged to Parker's Company, and had taken his place in line when the Captain ordered them to fall in.

Having no musket he realized he was of no use, and when the British were in full sight, left the line and stood as a spectator, about two rods away.

He saw the British commander ride up in advance, and heard his order to Parker's men to disperse, and then the order to fire, following it by firing his own pistol.

Sanderson looked for the effect, but saw no one fall, and thought the regulars could not be firing balls, so he did not move off.

After Parker's men had gone he saw the troops firing at one man, Solomon Brown. Then he knew they were firing balls, for he saw the wall behind which Brown stood smoke from the bullets hitting it.



THE BATTLE OF LEXINGTON BY J. BAKER

The wall saved Brown, who "legged it," as Sanderson expressed it, just about the time that he did.

Sanderson returned after the British had gone, and saw blood in the road where they stood.

He assisted in carrying the dead into the meeting house.

Deposition of William Tidd.

William Tidd, Lieutenant in Parker's Company, was in line on that morning.

Bear in mind Tidd's deposition of April 25, 1775, in which he joined with thirty-three others, to the effect that while some of Parker's Company had reached the parade, others were coming up; and while their backs were turned the troops fired.

Tidd, at that time, tried to believe himself a loyal subject of King George.

After the Revolution, which commenced on that April morning, had cancelled his allegiance, he felt free to amplify his first version of the affair.

On Dec. 29, 1824, he swore that he heard one of the British officers say:—

"Lay down your arms and disperse, ye rebels!"

Then they fired. Tidd retreated up the north road, our present Hancock Street, pursued by an officer on horseback, calling on him to stop or he was a dead man.

Tidd sprang over a pair of bars, made a stand, and fired at his pursuer, who in turn made *his* escape.

That statement, that he tried to kill one of the King's officers, would not have sounded very loyal in 1775.

Deposition of Joseph Underwood.

Joseph Underwood, one of Parker's Company, swore, on March 7, 1825, that some of the men, on seeing the British approach, proposed to quit the field, but Captain Parker gave orders for every man to stand his ground, and said he would order the first man shot who offered to leave his post.

Underwood swore that he was confident that Parker did not order his men to disperse till the British troops had fired the second time.

His testimony was not taken in 1775.

Deposition of John Munroe.

Corporal John Munroe's deposition was taken Dec. 28, 1824. He swore that he was alarmed about 2 o'clock,—that he immediately repaired

to the Common, and that Captain Parker ordered the roll called, and every man to load his gun with powder and ball. The men were then dismissed and ordered to remain within call of the drum.

About daybreak the drum beat, and Munroe took his station on the right. While the Company was collecting, Parker, then on the left, gave orders for every man to stand his ground until he should order them to leave. While the drum was still beating to arms the British appeared within ten or twelve rods of our line, and continued until within about eight rods.

An officer on horseback (whom Munroe erroneously thought to be Lieut.-Col. Smith), rode to the front and ordered our men to lay down their arms and disperse, and called them rebels.

Finding Parker's men kept their ground, he ordered his troops to fire. That order, not being immediately obeyed, he repeated it with an oath, when the front platoon did fire. Another order was given and then a general discharge from the front ranks.

After the first fire Corporal Munroe thought, and so stated to Ebenezer Munroe, Jr., who stood next to him on the left, that they had fired nothing but powder.

After the second volley Ebenezer Munroe, Jr., answered that it was more than powder, for he had received a wound in his arm, and that he would give them the guts of his gun.

Corporal John Munroe continued his statement by saying that then they both fired, aiming at the main body, the smoke preventing them from seeing anything more than the heads of some of their horses.

That statement as to smoke shows conclusively how soon after the volley fire was the Munroe return.

After the second fire Corporal John Munroe distinctly saw Jonas Parker struggling on the ground, with his gun in his hand, apparently attempting to load it. While in that situation the British came up and ran him through with the bayonet and killed him on the spot.

After firing the first time Munroe retreated about ten rods, loaded his gun a second time with two balls, fired at the British, and lost about a foot off the end of his gun barrel because of the extra heavy charge.

He also testified that he was confident other members of Parker's Company than himself and Ebenezer Munroe fired on the British. The regulars kept up their fire as long as any of Parker's men were in sight.

Isaac Muzzey, Jonathan Harrington, Robert Munroe, father of Corporal John, were killed near where the line was formed; Samuel Hadley and John Brown, after they had left the Common; Asahel Porter, the prisoner who attempted to escape, a few rods away; and Caleb Harrington as he was attempting to leave the meeting house, where he and others had gone before the British came up, for the purpose of removing the powder stored there.

Deposition of Ebenezer Munroe.

Ebenezer Munroe swore, on April 2, 1825, that Parker ordered his men to stand their ground and not to molest the regulars unless they meddled with them.

He spoke of the commanding British officer ordering them to disperse, and of his firing his pistol, and of the volley from the front rank.

After the first volley he received the wound in his arm, and as he turned to run discharged his own gun into the main body. As he fired, his face being towards them, a ball cut off part of one of his earlocks, and another passed between his arm and his body, marking his clothes.

As they were retreating one of the Company, Benjamin Sampson, he believed, who was running with him, turned and fired his piece.

"I am confident that it was the determination of most of our company, in case they were fired upon, to return the fire."

Ebenezer Munroe did not hear Captain Parker's order to disperse.

He believed at the time that some of their shots took effect, and was confirmed in that opinion by the observations of some prisoners taken in the afternoon, who stated that one of their soldiers was wounded in the thigh, and that another received a shot through the hand.

Depositon of Nathan Munroe.

Nathan Munroe's deposition was taken Dec. 22, 1824, and was to the effect that he was enrolled in Parker's Company, and knowing several British soldiers had gone up the road toward Concord, on the morning of April 18, he and Benjamin Tidd, at the request of Captain Parker, went to Bedford, and thence to Meriam's Corner, in Concord, to alarm the inhabitants of those towns.

When they returned to Lexington Common the alarm bell was ringing and the Company collecting.

He immediately got his arms and went to the parade, and heard Captain Parker's order to load, but not to fire unless they were fired upon.

About 5 o'clock the British appeared at the east end of the meeting house, near where our men were, and commenced firing on us.

Munroe got over the wall into Buckman's land and fired at them.

About the middle of the forenoon Captain Parker collected part of his Company and marched them towards Concord, and Nathan was one of them.

They met the regulars about noon in the bounds of Lincoln, retreating towards Boston, and fired on them continuously until they met their reinforcements in Lexington.

Deposition of Orderly Sergeant William Munroe.

Orderly Sergeant William Munroe's deposition was taken March 7, 1825.

At the time of the battle he was the landlord of Munroe Tavern.

Sergeant Munroe made oath that he was informed early in the evening of April 18 by Solomon Brown that he had seen nine British officers coming leisurely up the road from Boston, and as the wind occasionally blew their top coats aside he could see that they were armed.

Sergeant Munroe, fearing they intended to capture Hancock and Adams, assembled a guard of eight men, and proceeded to the home of Rev. Mr. Clarke, where they were stopping.

About midnight Revere rode up and gave the alarm.

Later Munroe conducted them to the north part of the town, and then returned to the Common, where he arrived about 2 o'clock.

Captain Parker and his Company were paraded on the Common, a little in the rear of the meeting house.

A messenger returned from towards Boston and reported that he could not learn there were any troops on the road from Boston. Parker then dismissed his men, with orders to assemble at the beat of the drum.

About daylight Captain Thaddeus Bowman rode up and gave the information that the regulars were near. The drum was ordered to be beat, and Munroe was commanded by Parker to parade the Company in two ranks, which he did, a few rods northerly from the meeting house.

The British came up, almost on the run. Major Pitcairn and another officer, whom Munroe erroneously called Col. Smith, rode up some rods in advance of their troops, and within a



THE BATTLE OF LENINGTON BY E. TISDALE

few rods of Parker's Company. One gave the order to "lay down your arms, you rebels, and disperse!" and immediately fired his pistol. After a moment's conversation with the other officer Pitcairn advanced to within four rods, and bringing down his sword with great force, and with an oath, gave the order to fire.

The front platoon of eight or nine men fired, but none of our men were killed or wounded. They immediately gave a second fire, when our Company began to retreat. As Munroe left the field he saw a person firing at the British from Buckman's back door, which was near his left. He was afterwards told that the same person, after firing from the back door, went to the front door and fired from there.

"How many of our Company fired before they retreated I cannot say; but I am confident some of them did."

He testified to having seen Jonas Parker standing in the ranks, with his balls and flints in his hat on the ground between his feet, and heard him declare that he would never run.

He was shot down at the second fire, and when Munroe left he saw him struggling on the ground, attempting to load his gun, which he had, no doubt, discharged at the British.

As he lay on the ground they run him through with the bayonet.

Munroe concluded his rather lengthy and very interesting deposition by reciting how the British dressed their wounded at his Tavern, which he had left in care of a lame man by the name of Raymond, who supplied them with whatever the house afforded.

Afterwards, when Raymond was leaving, the regulars shot him, and he was found dead within, a few rods of the house.

Of those ten deponents there were but two who gave their testimony to the Provincial Congress, Sanderson and Tidd.

The other eight, if solicited, refused to comply.

I have given a candid and complete summary of all of the official reports, and of all of the sworn statements of participants and eyewitnesses that I have ever found, so far as they apply to Lexington Common.

They do not agree with each other, nevertheless it is easy to arrive at this conclusion, that the first armed resistance to the British invasion was on Lexington Common.

As so many historians have only used the Narrative and Depositions of the Provincial

Congress it seems to me that it would be a desirable work for the Lexington Historical Society to publish it in full, or at least an analysis of that material, and place in opposition to it, equally as full, all of the other material that I have submitted.

There need be no fear of the result.

Not only publish it, but publish it thoroughly and world wide; not in thin pamphlet form, with perishable paper covers, but as a real book, in sturdy binding, thick enough to carry a golden title on its back, thick enough to stand alone on the library shelf.

Such a book has never been printed. In the interest of truth such a one is really needed.

For more than seven score years that scene has been misrepresented. By little effort, and by little expense, we can make available, in convenient and compact form, all of the original material.

We fondly cherish the names of those who were slain.

Let us also remember the names of those who fired back, and so changed a massacre into a battle; and so gave to Lexington a place in the world's history.

Possibly some day a modest tablet in bronze
may spell them out :

SOLOMON BROWN,
EBENEZER LOCK,
EBENEZER MUNROE, JR.,
CORPORAL JOHN MUNROE,
NATHAN MUNROE,
JONAS PARKER,
LIEUTENANT WILLIAM TIDD,
AND POSSIBLY
BENJAMIN SAMPSON.

When we stand on that hallowed ground let
the world stand with us,—not to view a field
where martyrs were slain, but to look upon the
battle ground where our soldier heroes dared to
fight,—and dared to die!

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