



The old North Bridge (in [Concord, Massachusetts](#)) was the scene of a battle between Patriots and Redcoats on the 19th of April, 1775.

Americans were waiting for the British to arrive since Dr. Prescott, eluding capture (unlike Paul Revere), was able to warn the townspeople.

The British thought the colonial militia, in Massachusetts, consisted of a "ragtag" group of men who didn't know how to fight. Instead, with few exceptions, these militia men were able-bodied individuals between the ages of 16 and 60 who were well organized and required to serve.

For nearly 150 years, men like these served as the colony's main defenders.

The battle at the Old North Bridge occurred early in America's war for independence. What do we know about the bridge itself, and what happened there after Paul Revere's famous ride? The National Park Service provides us with [interesting information](#).

*What is the name of the river?*

*The North Bridge spans the Concord River. Ironically, as Nathaniel Hawthorne once pointed out, the name Concord implies peace and harmony.*

*How old is the North Bridge?*

*The North Bridge that visitors walk over today is actually a recent (summer of 2005) restoration of the last bridge built on this site in 1956. The 1956 bridge is the fifth bridge to occupy this hallowed ground since the time of the battle in 1775. The bridge that was there in 1775, the "battle bridge," was taken down in 1788.*

*Are there really bodies buried in the Grave of the British Soldiers? Do we know who they were?*

*Yes, there are two soldiers buried in the grave. British military records indicate that there were three soldiers (all privates in the 4th Regiment) missing and presumed dead after the North Bridge fight: James Hall, Thomas Smith and Patrick Gray. One of these three men is buried in Concord center; there is a stone marker for him on Monument St. The other two are buried here.*

*What was the reason for the British expedition to Concord?*

*On the evening of April 18, 1775, General Thomas Gage sent approximately 700 British soldiers out to Concord (about 18 miles distant) to seize and destroy military stores and equipment known to be stockpiled in the town.*

*Under great pressure from his superiors in England to bring Massachusetts back under control of the "lawful government," General Gage sent the troops to Concord in the hopes that by doing so, he could convince the colonists to back down, and thus avoid an armed rebellion.*

*General Gage also believed that seizing stockpiles of weapons was not only a military necessity, but also his prerogative as governor of the colony. The colonists actively disagreed.*

*Why were British soldiers guarding the North Bridge?*

*General Gage, in his orders to Lt. Colonel Smith, commander of the British expedition to Concord, directed him to take control of the two bridges in town, the South Bridge and the North Bridge. "You will observe...that it will be necessary to secure the two bridges as soon as possible..."*

*Securing the bridges was necessary to prevent rebels from slipping across from remote parts of town to threaten the mission. Also, Lt. Colonel Smith sent seven companies across the North Bridge with orders to search for supplies and artillery known to be hidden at Barrett's farm, about a mile west of the bridge.*

*At that time, the colonists occupied the high ground overlooking the bridge. If they were to swoop down and take the bridge, the British soldiers at Barrett's farm would be cut off. Therefore, the British left three companies (about 96 men) at the bridge to guard it.*

*Where were the British and Colonial soldiers standing when shots were exchanged across the river?*

*When the British first deployed at the North Bridge, they were positioned on the west side of the river. This is the side where the Minute Man Statue now stands. The colonial militia, with over 400 men, occupied the high ground overlooking the bridge.*

*Sometime after 9:00 a.m. the militiamen, believing the town was being set on fire, marched down upon the bridge. According to one British officer, they did so "in a very military manner."*

*Hopelessly outnumbered by the advancing militia, the British soldiers pulled back to the east side of the bridge, where the 1836 Obelisk now stands, and hastily organized for defense. According to one British officer, "Captain Laurie made us retire to this side of the bridge, which by the bye he ought to have done at the first for the rebels were so near..."*

*When the shots were fired, the British were on the east side (1836 Obelisk) and the colonists were on the west side (Minute Man Statue).*

To this day, we can visit the Old North Bridge which remains an important place in American history. Click on the image for a great view.

Credits:

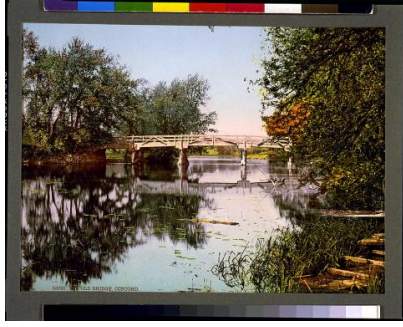
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