

# *Paul Revere makes his famous midnight ride, April 18, 1775*

On this day in history, April 18, 1775, Paul Revere makes his famous midnight ride to warn the countryside that the British Regulars were coming. Revere was one of the most well-connected and trusted patriots of the inner circle of patriot leaders in Boston.

Patriots in Boston were constantly watching British movements and listening to their conversations surreptitiously. In the days leading up to the Battles of Lexington and Concord, the patriots became aware that a major movement was being planned. They did not know the exact date of the movement, or the target, but common sense told them that the patriot leaders, John Hancock and Samuel Adams, might be the target, as well as a large cache of weapons and ammunition being stored in Concord.

Two days before the 18th, Paul Revere was sent into the countryside to share the latest intelligence with rural patriot leaders. One stop he made was in Lexington, where Hancock and Adams were staying with the Reverend Jonas Clark, having fled Boston for their own safety. Revere warned them that a major action was planned for the near future and that they may be the target. After this, he went on to Concord and warned the citizens that the arms cache might be the target. The citizens quickly went about moving the supplies to other locations.

On the evening of April 18, Paul Revere received a message from Dr. Joseph Warren that his inside spy had informed him the action would take place the following day and the target was the arms at Concord. Revere immediately instructed Robert Newman to place a prearranged signal in the steeple of the Old North Church to inform the inhabitants of Charlestown that the British would be making their trek by sea and not by land – hence the phrase, "One if by land, two if by

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sea." Revere then crossed the Charles River in a boat, arrived in Charlestown and set off for Lexington on a borrowed horse.

On the way, Revere was discovered by a British patrol, but he escaped to the north and made a round-about ride to Lexington. He arrived in Lexington around 12:30 that night and informed Hancock, Adams and the local militia the British were coming. Revere was joined by William Dawes, another rider sent by Warren and Dr. Samuel Prescott as they rode on to Concord. Along the way, however, they ran into another British patrol that scattered the group. Prescott got away and rode on to Concord. Dawes got away, but fell off his horse and walked back to Lexington.

Revere was captured, a fact unknown to most Americans. He was ordered to divulge any information he had at gunpoint. He calmly told them that 500 Americans would be there with guns shortly. Just then, shots were heard from Lexington (it was actually the militia congregating). The shots spooked the soldiers and they rode off, leaving Revere behind with no horse. Revere then went back to Lexington, and helped get some belongings of Hancock out of the town and joined the Revolution.

On the morning of the 19th, the American Revolution would break out when the British soldiers marched into Lexington. Through the rest of the war, Revere would frequently be called on to deliver messages as far as New York and Philadelphia. He would also serve as a lieutenant colonel of artillery in the Massachusetts Militia and as Commander of Fort Independence in Boston Harbor.