

Summary: War Begins

Moving Toward War

Colonists who opposed British rule called themselves Patriots. They were angry about the Intolerable Acts. Throughout the colonies, militias prepared for war against Britain.

General Thomas Gage was the British official in Massachusetts. He learned that Patriots were storing cannons and gunpowder in Concord. He sent soldiers to destroy the supplies. Patriots Paul Revere and William Dawes learned of the plan. They rode through the night to warn the minutemen that the British were coming.

The First Battles

On April 19, 1775, British soldiers and minutemen in Lexington began shooting. Colonists were killed and wounded. Hundreds of minutemen gathered in Concord. They forced the British soldiers back to Boston. Along the way, colonists killed or wounded more than 250 British soldiers.

Colonists heard of the battles. Militias trapped British soldiers in Boston. Patriots planned to build a fort on Bunker Hill. They built it on Breed's Hill instead. British soldiers marched up the hill. They fought until the Patriots ran out of gunpowder. The British captured the fort. This was called the Battle of Bunker Hill. Even though they lost the battle, the Patriots showed they could plan and fight well.

A Colonial Army

The Second Continental Congress met in 1775. It created an army to go to war against Britain. George Washington was commander of the Continental Army. Many delegates did not want a war. They sent the Olive Branch Petition to King George III. It asked him to help end the conflict peacefully. But the king sent more soldiers. The Continental Army captured Fort Ticonderoga. The army used cannons it found there to force the British to leave Boston.



Before You Read

Find and underline each vocabulary word.

Patriot *noun*, a colonist who opposed British rule

militia *noun*, a group of ordinary people who train for battle

minutemen *noun*, militia with special training

commander *noun*, an officer in charge of an army

petition *noun*, a written request from a number of people



After You Read

REVIEW Why did General Gage send British soldiers to Concord? Circle the words that tell what the colonists were storing near Boston.

REVIEW Why was the Battle of Bunker Hill important for the colonists? Underline the sentence that tells what the Patriots showed they could do.

REVIEW What was the Olive Branch Petition? Underline what the petition asked King George to do.