



Primary Source Analysis

The Battle of Lexington

CONTEXTUAL INFORMATION FOR SOURCES #1 & 2

Immediately after the Battle of Lexington and Concord on April 19, 1775, the Provincial Congress took depositions from eyewitnesses of the day's events. These depositions were published as *A Narrative of the Excursion and Ravages of the Kings Troops* and sent to London in late April of 1775. The Provincial Congress hired a schooner to deliver the depositions across the Atlantic. The collection of the colonial account of April 19, 1775, including Source #1 & 2 below, arrived in England two weeks before General Gage's account of the events. These accounts are cited in London newspapers and are the first accounts English citizens read about April 19, 1775. As you read, consider why the Provincial Congress would collect depositions and send them to the British government so quickly.

CONTEXTUAL INFORMATION FOR SOURCES #3 & 4



As the 50th anniversary of the Battles of Lexington and Concord approached, the town of Lexington created a commission to collect depositions about April 19, 1775 from the surviving veterans of the conflict on the Lexington Green. Elias Phinney published these depositions, including Sources #3 and 4 below, as the pamphlet *History of the Battle at Lexington* in 1825. In the introduction, Phinney cites three main reasons for collection the depositions. First, he calls into question the validity of the April 1775 depositions, claiming the men would have left details out in order to prevent incriminating themselves to the British government. Second, Phinney wanted to disprove claims that Concord was the site of the, "first forcible resistance" by the colonists and that, "the first blood was shed between the British and the armed Americans" at the North Bridge. These claims began appearing in print after the visit of the Marquis de Lafayette in September 1824 and proved to be a point of contention between the two towns for decades. Thirdly, the town wanted to give the veterans of April 19th the opportunity to share the true story of April 19, 1775 before they died and no eyewitnesses were left their experiences. As you read, consider the motivations the men might have when giving the following depositions.