

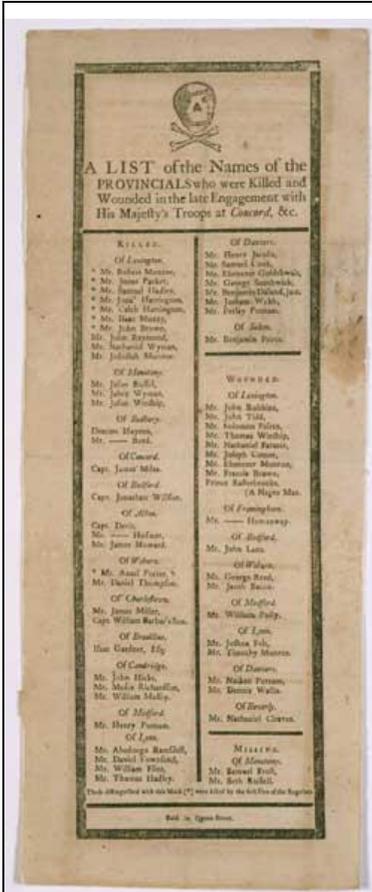
# What Were They Defending?

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## Framing Question:

What issues, decisions and actions brought colonists and the British to the point of confrontation on the Lexington Green and Concord's North Bridge? What were they defending?

## Documents:



Doc A: *A List of the Names of the Provincials who were Killed and Wounded....* [Boston: Edes and Gill, 1775]

<http://www.masshist.org/database/523>

1. How many different towns sent militia to Concord?
2. Which town had the most people die on this day?
3. How well do you think these men knew each other?



Doc B: "Boston, May 28. At a Meeting of the Freeholders ..." Article from page 2 of *The Massachusetts Gazette and Boston News-Letter*, Number 3145, 31 May 1764  
<http://www.masshist.org/database/290>

1. What is being declared in this document?
2. How might English actions since 1763 be perceived by the colonists?



Doc C: *In Congress, at Watertown, April 30, 1775*. Broadside by Massachusetts Provincial Congress. [Watertown: Benjamin Edes, 1775]  
<http://www.masshist.org/database/497>

1. What does Congress propose to do?
2. If you were a young man at this time, do you believe Dr. Warren that the safety of your family was at stake?

Nowhere in the above documents does it speak to enlightened ideals of liberty, but rather these documents show that these men were fighting to preserve their way of life, not to create a new one. As demonstrated in document A, towns and villages sacrificed a great deal on April 19, 1775, especially Lexington. In Concord, on the North Bridge they thought their town was being burned, but the men of Lexington who attacked the British on their march back to Boston were doing it for their town and families. Document B reinforces the ideal that they were fighting for their long established right to self

govern. They were not fighting to gain this privilege—they already had it and wanted to keep it. Finally, document C reveals that the colonists knew that they must mobilize to protect their families, a very basic instinct.

### **Artifact**

Concord Meeting House, 1841.

<http://www.firstparish.org/cms/about-first-parish/history-of-fp>



The meeting house of colonial New England played an important role in shaping the beliefs of the colonials not only when it came to religion but also when it came to government. There was no separation of church and state. People would come to the meeting house to hear a sermon from their reverend or to discuss the various political issues that were affecting the town.

1. Why was the meeting house so important to the colonists?
2. How did the interaction of religion and government affect the colonists?
3. Is there an equivalent structure to the meeting house today?
4. How was the meeting house directly affected by the actions of the British and why was this seen as a threat to the colonists' way of life?
5. Imagine that you are a colonist during the time period that is used to a certain way of life; describe how your feelings toward the British would change?

## Landscape

Wright Tavern, Concord, Massachusetts



Taverns played a pivotal role on the eve of the American Revolution. Taverns were gathering places for both locals and those passing through. Conversations inevitably focused on politics, business, and gossip from the surrounding towns and countryside. Letters, Newspapers, business and legal matters flowed freely much like the cider and beverages. Taverns were situated on main traveling roads where weary travelers could easily seek lodging for a night.

1. What do you think the topics of conversation were inside the Wright Tavern?
2. How do you think Concord residents responded to the events unfolding in Boston up to 1775?
3. What role do you think Wright Tavern had after the battle of Lexington?
4. How do you think residents prepared for the coming British troops?
5. What other questions/information would you like to know about Wright Tavern?

## **Assessments**

1. Students will write a short newspaper account, with bold headlines, on the events of April 18th and 19th. All students will pool their accounts to create a newspaper broadside.
2. Students will write an essay addressing the following question: What issues, decisions and actions brought colonists and the British to the point of confrontation on the Lexington Green and Concord's North Bridge? What were they defending?

A good answer will include specific examples from each section of this lesson. Students should be able to cite a variety of reasons for what they were fighting for on that April day. Yes, their rights of Englishmen were being violated, but they were also fighting for their way of life.