



# INSIDE THE VAULT

*Firsthand Accounts of the Battles of  
Lexington & Concord*

with Dr. Brooke Barbier

THURSDAY, APRIL 3, 2025

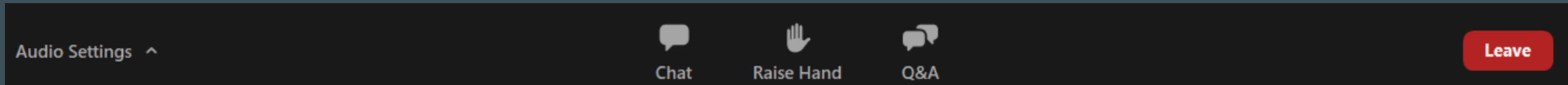
☆☆☆

THE  
GILDER LEHRMAN  
INSTITUTE  
of  
AMERICAN HISTORY

☆☆☆



# How to Participate



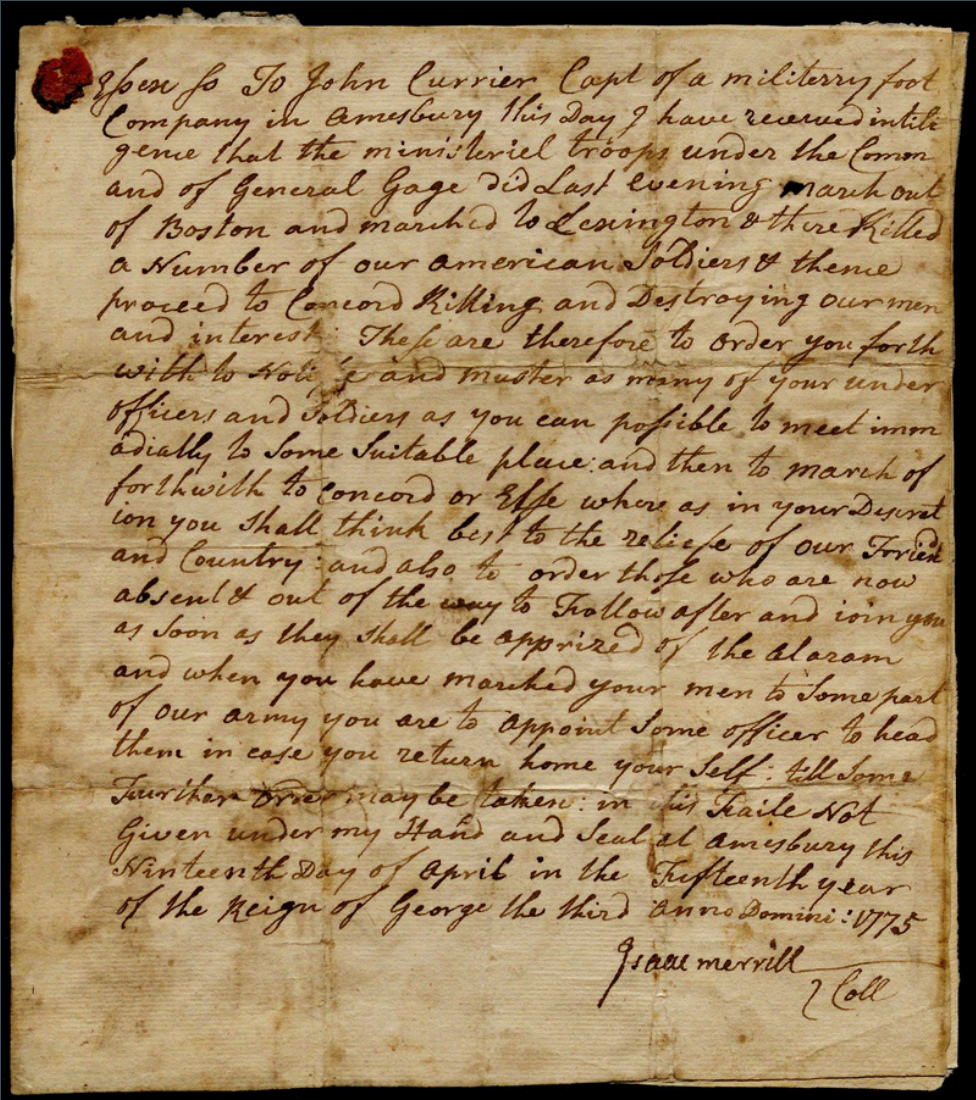
- If you would like to ask a question, you can use the Q&A feature.
- We will be answering audience questions throughout the session.
- The views expressed here are those of the historian.

## For Security and Privacy

- Your microphone is automatically muted.
- Your camera is automatically turned off.



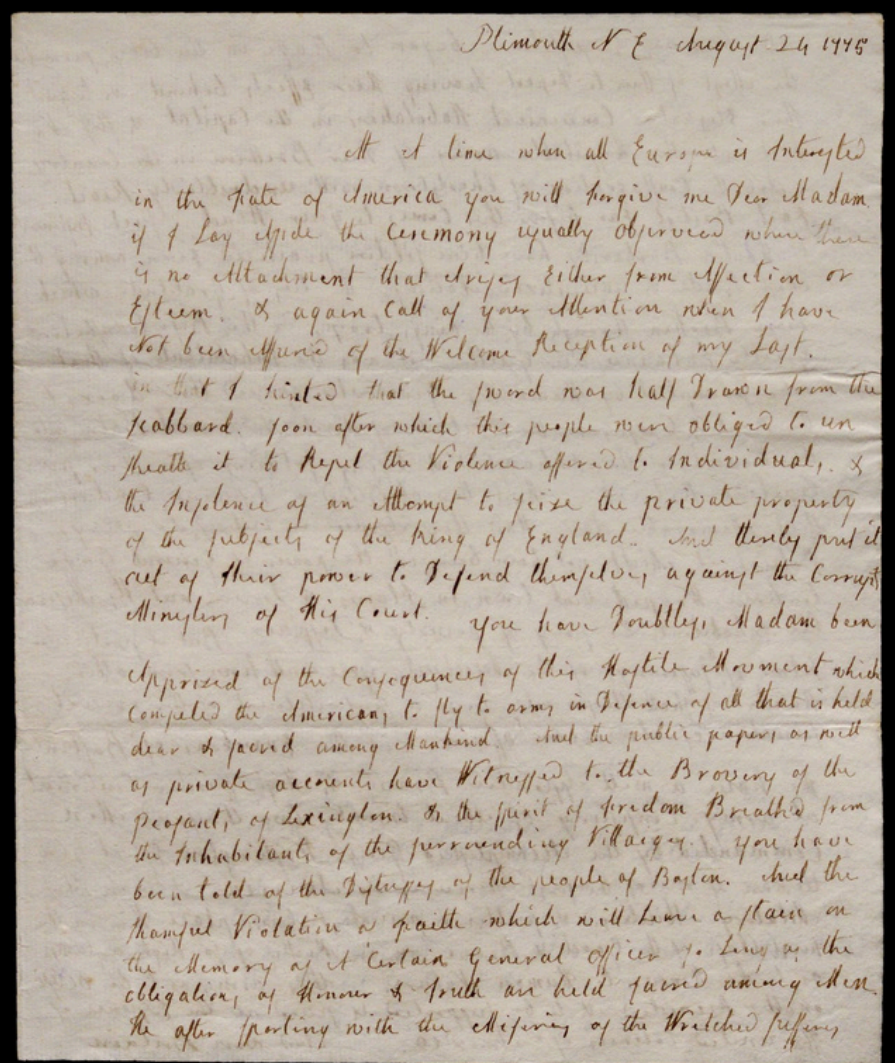
# Today's Documents



Open to John Currier Capt of a military foot  
Company in Amesbury this Day I have received intelli  
gence that the ministerial troops under the Com  
and of General Gage did last evening march out  
of Boston and marched to Lexington & there killed  
a Number of our American Soldiers & thence  
proceed to Concord killing and Destroying our men  
and interest. They are therefore to order you forth  
with to take & muster as many of your under  
officers and Soldiers as you can possible to meet imm  
ediately to some suitable place and then to march of  
forthwith to Concord or else where as in your Discre  
tion you shall think best to the relief of our Friend  
and Country and also to order those who are now  
absent & out of the way to follow after and join you  
as soon as they shall be apprized of the Alarm  
and when you have marched your men to some part  
of our army you are to appoint some officer to head  
them in case you return home your self. All some  
further Order may be taken in this Mail Not  
Given under my Hand and Seal at Amesbury this  
Nineteenth Day of April in the Twelfth year  
of the Reign of George the third Anno Domini: 1775  
Isaac Merrill Coll

Isaac Merrill to John Currier,  
April 19, 1775.  
(Gilder Lehrman Institute,  
GLC03003)

Mercy Otis Warren to Catharine Macaulay,  
Plymouth, Massachusetts, August 24, 1775.  
(Gilder Lehrman Institute, GLC01800.02)

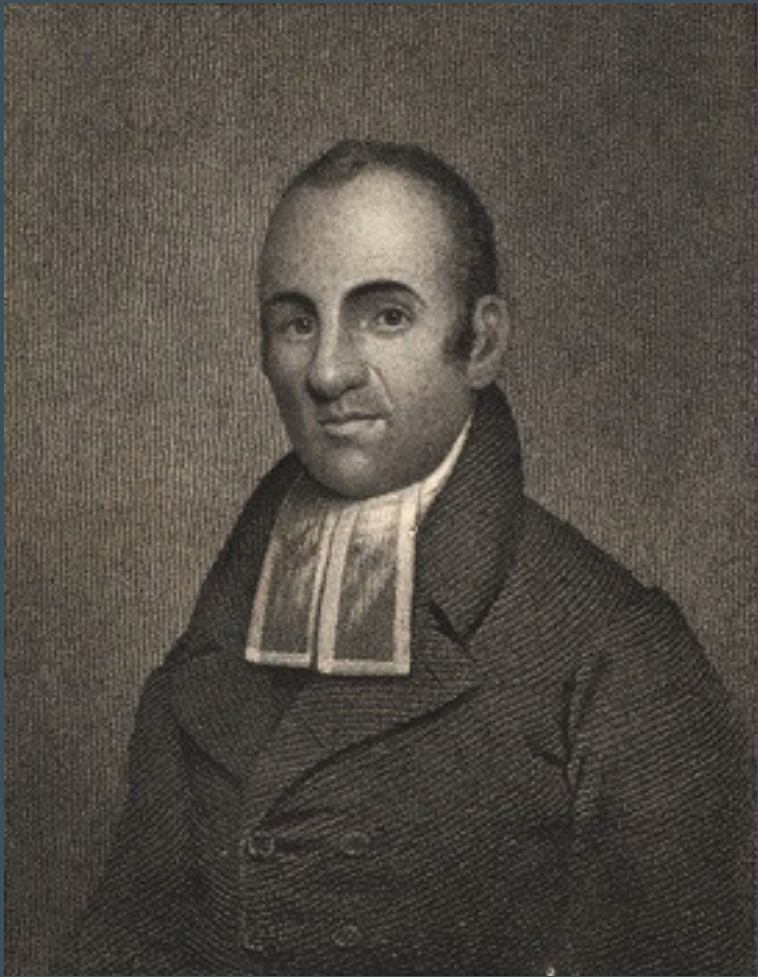


Plymouth 24 August 1775  
At a time when all Europe is interested  
in the State of America you will forgive me Dear Madam  
if I lay aside the Ceremony usually observed when there  
is no Attachment that arises either from Affection or  
Esteem. & again call of your Attention when I have  
not been apprized of the Welcome Reception of my Last.  
in that I hinted that the sword was half drawn from the  
scabbard. soon after which this people were obliged to un  
sheath it to Repel the Violence offered to Individuals, &  
the Impudence of an attempt to seize the private property  
of the subjects of the King of England. And thereby put it  
out of their power to defend themselves against the corrupt  
Ministry of His Court. you have doubtless Madam been  
Apprized of the Consequences of this Hostile Movement which  
compels the Americans to fly to arms in Defense of all that is held  
dear & sacred among Mankind. And the public papers as well  
as private accounts have witnessed to the Browning of the  
peopants of Lexington. & the spirit of Freedom Breaths from  
the Inhabitants of the surrounding Villages. you have  
been told of the Sufferings of the people of Boston. And the  
shameful Violation of Faith which will leave a stain on  
the Memory of a certain General officer so long as the  
obligations of Honor & Truth are held sacred among Men.  
He after sporting with the effusions of the Wretched people



BLOODY BUTCHERY.  
BRITISH TROOPS.  
RUNAWAY FIGHT OF THE REGULARS.  
Being the PARTICULARS of the VICTORIOUS BATTLE fought at and near CONCORD, situated Twenty Miles from Boston, in the  
Province of the Massachusetts-Bay, in New-England, between Two Thousand Regular Troops, belonging to his Britannic Majesty, and a few  
Hundred Provincial Troops, belonging to the Province of Massachusetts-Bay, which lasted from sunrise to sunset, on the 19th of April,  
1775, when it was decided greatly in favor of the latter. These particulars are now published in this cheap form, at the request of the friends  
of the deceased WORTHIES, who died gloriously fighting in the cause of 1775 and their country, and it is their sincere desire that every  
Householder in the country, who are sincere well-wishers to America, may be possessed of the same, either to frame and glaze, or otherwise to  
perpetrate in their houses, not only as a token of Gratitude to the memory of the Deceased Forty Persons, but as a perpetual memorial of that  
important event, on which, perhaps, may depend the future Freedom and Greatness of the Commonwealth of America. To which is annexed,  
a Funeral Elegy on those who were slain in the Battle.

“Bloody Butchery by the British Troops,”  
printed broadside by Ezekiel Russell,  
Salem, Massachusetts, 1775. (Gilder  
Lehrman Institute, GLC04810)



“Rev. Lemuel Haynes, A.M.,”  
engraving, n.d. (New York Public  
Library Digital Collections)



# Dr. Brooke Barbier



Dr. Brooke Barbier is a public historian specializing in Boston's social and cultural life during and after the American Revolution. She earned her PhD in American history from Boston College and is the founder of Ye Olde Tavern Tours, a popular tour company that explores Boston's historic sites and taverns. She is the author of *King Hancock: The Radical Influence of a Moderate Founding Father* and has been featured in numerous media outlets, including the *New York Times* and the *Boston Globe*.





# Timeline



## Summer 1774 Coercive Acts

British Parliament passed a series of laws in response to the Boston Tea Party.

## February 26, 1775 Salem Gunpowder Raid

Colonists successfully stopped British troops from raiding Salem.



## December 16, 1773 Boston Tea Party

To protest the Tea Act, colonists dumped chests of tea into the Boston Harbor.

## September 1774 Gunpowder Raid

British troops secretly removed gunpowder from a powder house in Somerville, Massachusetts.

## April 18, 1775 Paul Revere

Revere rode to Lexington, Massachusetts to warn of the impending British attack

Above: Detail from “The Bostonian’s Paying the Excise-man, or Tarring & Feathering, “ 1774.  
(Gilder Lehrman Institute, GLC04961.01)

Above: Statue of Paul Revere in Boston.  
(Courtesy of Brooke Barbier)



# Isaac Merrill

- Born February 25, 1708, in Newbury, Massachusetts
- Delegate to the Massachusetts Provincial Congress representing Amesbury
- Colonel in the Militia
- Spread news of the British attack on Lexington and mobilized the Amesbury militia

# John Currier

- Born October 17, 1726, in Amesbury, Massachusetts
- Captain of the Amesbury militia who fought at the Battle of Lexington and Battle of Bunker Hill



[Silhouette of man facing left, no. 4], by Charles Willson Peale, 1761. (Library of Congress)



# Calling Out the Amesbury Militia

To John Currier Capt of a militerry foot Company in Amesbury this Day  
I have received intilgence that the ministeriel troops under the Command  
of General Gage did Last evening march out of Boston and marched to  
Lexington & there Killed a Number of our american Soldiers & thence  
proceed to Concord Killing and Destroying our men and interest. These  
are therefore to Order you forthwith to Mobilize and muster as many of  
your under officers and Soldiers as you can possible to meet immediatly to  
Some Suitable place: and then to march of forthwith to Concord or Else  
where as in your Descretion you Shall think best to the reliefe of our  
Friend and Country: and also to order those who are now absent & out of  
the way to Follow after and ioin you as Soon as they shall be apprized of  
the Alaram and when you have marched your men to Some part of our  
army you are to appoint Some officer to head them in case you return  
home your Self: till Some Further order may be taken: in this Faile Not  
Given under my Hand and Seal at Amesbury this Ninteenth Day of April  
in the Fifteenth year of the Reign of George the third Anno Domini: 1775

Isaac merrill/Coll

Open so To John Currier Capt of a militerry foot  
Company in Amesbury this Day I have received intil  
gence that the ministeriel troops under the Com  
and of General Gage did Last evening march out  
of Boston and marched to Lexington & there Killed  
a Number of our american Soldiers & thence  
proceed to Concord Killing and Destroying our men  
and interest. These are therefore to Order you forth  
with to Mobilize and muster as many of your under  
officers and Soldiers as you can possible to meet imm  
ediately to Some Suitable place: and then to march of  
forthwith to Concord or Else where as in your Descret  
ion you Shall think best to the reliefe of our Friend  
and Country: and also to order those who are now  
absent & out of the way to Follow after and ioin you  
as Soon as they shall be apprized of the Alaram  
and when you have marched your men to Some part  
of our army you are to appoint Some officer to head  
them in case you return home your Self: till Some  
Further Order may be taken: in this Faile Not  
Given under my Hand and Seal at Amesbury this  
Ninteenth Day of April in the Fifteenth year  
of the Reign of George the third Anno Domini: 1775  
Isaac merrill  
Coll

Isaac Merrill to John Currier, April 19, 1775.

(Gilder Lehrman Institute, GLC03003)



# Battle of Lexington

“Plate I. The Battle of Lexington,”  
Amos Doolittle, Lexington,  
Massachusetts, April 1775.  
(Library of Congress)



THE BATTLE OF LEXINGTON April 1775

Courtesy Connecticut Historical Society, Hartford



# Battle of Concord

“Plate III. The engagement at the North Bridge in Concord,” Amos Doolittle, 1775.

(New York Public Library)





# Spreading News of the “Bloody Butchery”



“Bloody Butchery by the British Troops,” printed broadside by Ezekiel Russell, Salem, Massachusetts, 1775. (Gilder Lehrman Institute, GLC04810)



# Spreading News of the “Bloody Butchery”



Detail from “Bloody Butchery by the British Troops,” printed broadside by Ezekiel Russell, Salem, Massachusetts, 1775. (Gilder Lehrman Institute, GLC04810)



# Lemuel Haynes



- Born July 18, 1753, in Hartford, Connecticut
- 
- Enlisted as a minuteman in the local militia in 1774
- Helped secure the prize (British artillery) at Fort Ticonderoga after its capture
- First Black man in the US to be ordained as a minister and to receive an honorary college degree
- Wrote the “The Battle of Lexington” and “Liberty Further Extended”
- Died on September 28, 1833, in Granville, New York

“Rev. Lemuel Haynes, A.M.,” engraving, n.d.  
(New York Public Library Digital Collections)



# “The Battle of Lexington” by Lemuel Haynes



[3] The Nineteenth Day of April last  
We ever shall retain  
As monumental of the past  
most bloody shocking Scene

[4] Then Tyrants fill'd with horrid Rage  
A fatal Journey went  
& Unmolested to engage  
And slay the innocent

[6] At Lexington they did appear  
Array'd in hostile Form  
And tho our Friends were peacefull there  
Yet on them fell the Storm

[8] The Savage Band still march along  
For Concord they were bound  
while Oaths & Curses from their Tongue  
Accent with hellish Sound

[14] For Liberty, each Hero Freeman strives  
As its a Gift of God  
And for it willing yield their Lives  
And Seal it with their Blood

[15] Thrice happy they Who who thus resign  
Into the peacefull Grave  
Much better there, in Death Confin'd  
Than a Surviving Slave



# Mercy Otis Warren



Portrait of Mercy Otis Warren by John Singleton Copley, 1763. (Museum of Fine Arts, Boston)

- Born September 14, 1728, in Barnstable, Massachusetts
- Wrote plays, poems, and dramas that denounced British officials and policies
- First woman to publish a history of the American Revolution

# Catharine MacCaulay



Portrait of Catharine MacCaulay by Robert Edge Pine, circa 1775. (National Portrait Gallery, UK)

- Born April 2, 1731, in Kent, United Kingdom
- Widely acknowledged as England's first female historian and pamphleteer
- Opposed monarchical government and supported the American Revolution in her works



# Civilian Perspectives

Plymouth N<sup>e</sup> August 24 1775

At a time when all Europe is interested  
in the state of America you will forgive me Dear Madam  
if I lay aside the ceremony usually observed when there  
is no attachment that arises either from affection or  
Esteem. & again call of your Attention when I have  
not been apprised of the Welcome Reception of my Last.

In that I hinted that the sword was half drawn from the  
scabbard. soon after which this people were obliged to un-  
sheath it to Repel the Violence offered to Individuals, &  
the Impudence of an attempt to seize the private property  
of the subjects of the King of England. And thereby put it  
out of their power to defend themselves against the Corrupt  
Ministry of His Court. you have Doubtless Madam been

Apprized of the Consequences of this Hostile Movement which  
compelled the Americans to fly to arms in Defence of all that is held  
dear & sacred among Mankind. And the public papers as well  
as private accounts have Witnessed to the Bravery of the  
Peasants of Lexington. & the spirit of Freedom Breathed from  
the Inhabitants of the surrounding Villages. you have  
been told of the Distress of the people of Boston. And the  
shameful Violation of Faith which will leave a stain on  
the memory of a certain General officer so long as the  
obligations of Honour & Truth are held sacred among Men.  
He after sporting with the miseries of the Wretched suffers

“And the public papers as well as private accounts have Witnessed to the Bravery of the Peasants of Lexington, & the spirit of Freedom Breath’d from the Inhabitants of the surrounding Villages.”

“Such Instances of Wanton Barbarity have been seldom practiced Even among the Most Rude & uncivilized Nations, the ties of Gratitude which were Broken through by the kings troops in this Base translation Greatly Enhances their Guilt. it was the Inhabitants of that town who prompted by Humanity Generously opened their doors to the Routed Corps on the Nineteenth of April, & poured Balm into the Wound; of the Exhausted & dying Soldiers after their precipitant Retreat.”

Mercy Otis Warren to Catharine Macaulay,  
Plymouth, Massachusetts, August 24, 1775.  
(Gilder Lehrman Institute, GLC01800.02)



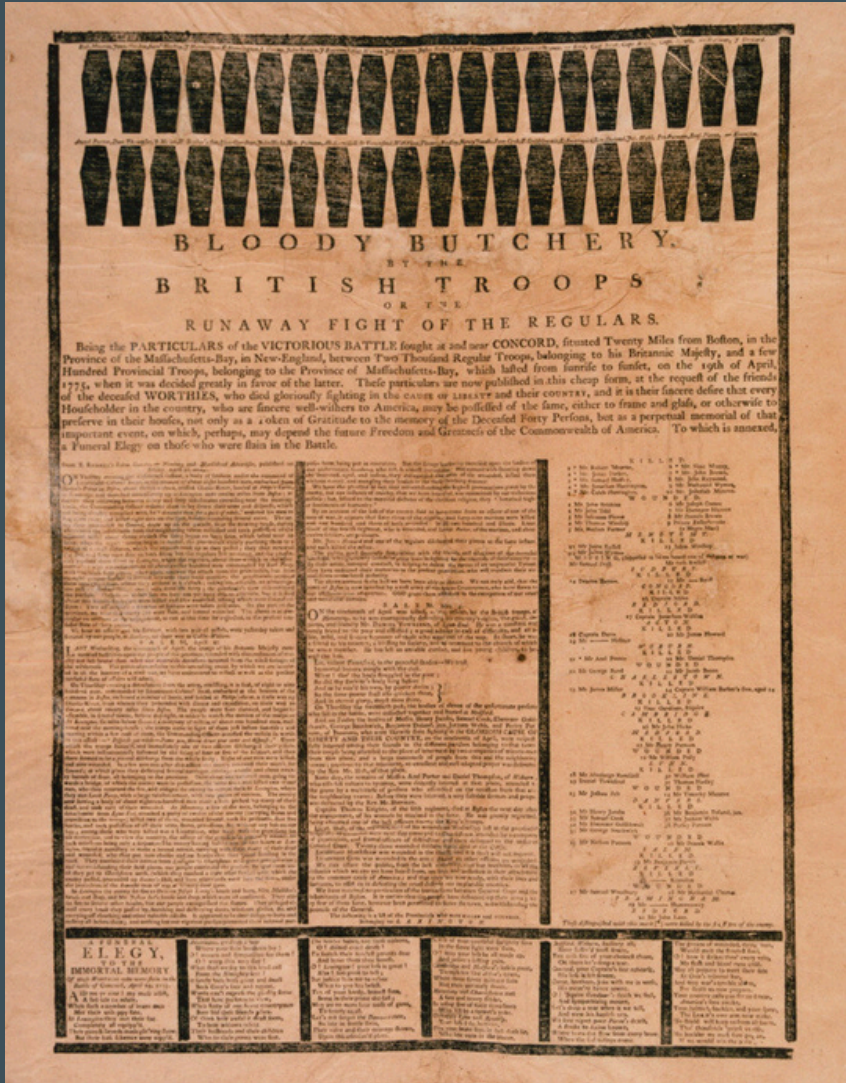
Open to John Currier Capt of a military foot  
Company in Amesbury this Day I have received intelli-  
gence that the ministerial troops under the Com-  
and of General Gage did last evening march out  
of Boston and marched to Lexington & there killed  
a number of our American Soldiers & thence  
proceed to Concord killing and destroying our men  
and interest. They are therefore to order you forth-  
with to hold a muster as many of your under  
officers and Soldiers as you can possible to meet imm-  
ediately to some suitable place and then to march of  
forthwith to Concord or else where as in your discre-  
tion you shall think best to the relief of our Friend  
and Country and also to order those who are now  
absent & out of the way to follow after and join you  
as soon as they shall be apprized of the alarm  
and when you have marched your men to some part  
of our army you are to appoint some officer to head  
them in case you return home your self. All some  
further order may be taken in this matter not  
given under my Hand and Seal at Amesbury this  
Nineteenth Day of April in the Twelfth year  
of the Reign of George the third Anno Domini: 1775  
Isaac Merrill Coll

Isaac Merrill to John Currier,  
April 19, 1775.  
(Gilder Lehrman Institute,  
GLC03003)

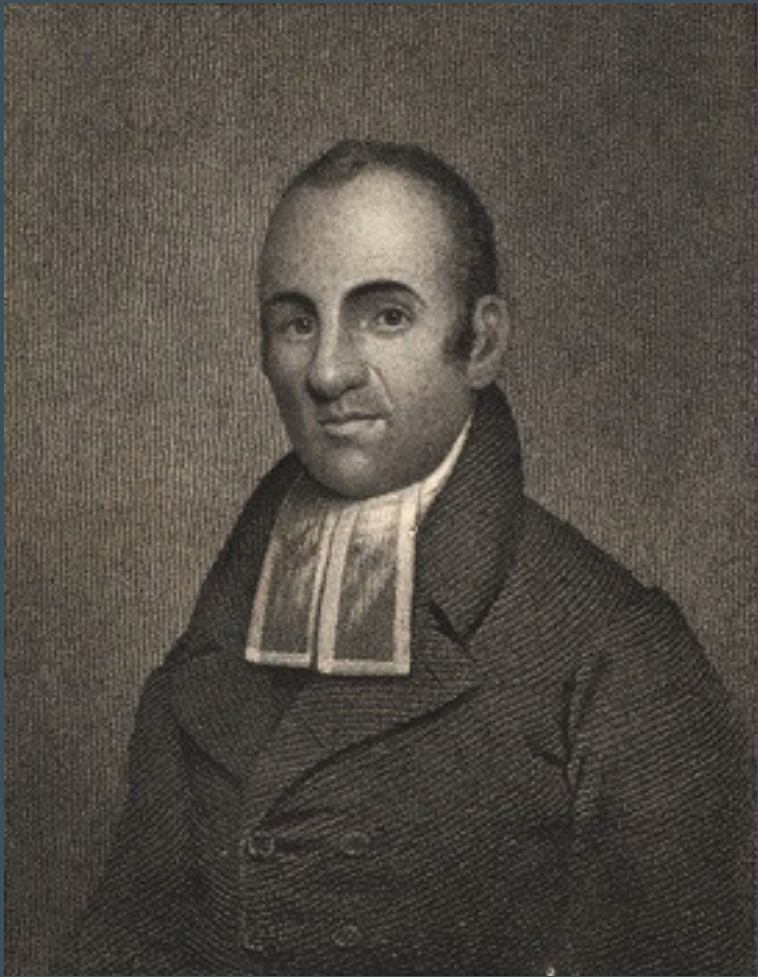
Mercy Otis Warren to Catharine Macaulay,  
Plymouth, Massachusetts, August 24, 1775.  
(Gilder Lehrman Institute, GLC01800.02)

Plymouth 24 August 1775

At a time when all Europe is interested  
in the State of America you will forgive me Dear Madam  
if I lay aside the Ceremony usually observed when there  
is no Attachment that arises either from Affection or  
Esteem & again call of your Attention when I have  
not been apprized of the Welcome Reception of my Last.  
in that I hinted that the sword was half drawn from the  
scabbard soon after which this people were obliged to un-  
sheath it to repel the Violence offered to Individuals &  
the Impudence of an attempt to seize the private property  
of the subjects of the King of England. And thereby put it  
out of their power to defend themselves against the corrupt  
Ministry of this Court. you have doubtless Madam been  
Apprized of the Consequences of this Hostile Movement which  
compels the Americans to fly to arms in Defense of all that is held  
dear & sacred among Mankind. And the public papers as well  
as private accounts have witnessed to the Browning of the  
people of Lexington & the spirit of Freedom Breaths from  
the Inhabitants of the surrounding Villages. you have  
been told of the Sufferings of the people of Boston. And the  
shameful Violation of Faith which will leave a stain on  
the Memory of a certain General officer so long as the  
obligations of Honor & Faith are held sacred among Men.  
He after sporting with the effigies of the Wretched people



“Bloody Butchery by the British Troops,”  
printed broadside by Ezekiel Russell,  
Salem, Massachusetts, 1775. (Gilder  
Lehrman Institute, GLC04810)



“Rev. Lemuel Haynes, A.M.,”  
engraving, n.d. (New York Public  
Library Digital Collections)



# Upcoming Free Programs

## INSIDE THE VAULT:

- May 1 at 7 p.m. ET (4 p.m. PT): We will discuss Ted Kennedy's Letter on the end of the Vietnam War with Dr. Barbara Perry (University of Virginia).
- June 5 at 7 p.m. ET (4 p.m. PT): We will discuss the transcontinental railroad with Dr. Gordan Chang (Stanford University).

## BOOK BREAKS:

- April 6 at 2 p.m. ET (11 a.m. PT): Dr. Abigail Mullen will discuss her book *To Fix a National Character: The United States in the First Barbary War, 1800–1805*.

