The American Revolution is perhaps the most important aspect of this country’s history. This was the time at which the colonists, who had been oppressed by the cruel government of Britain for decades, were able to gain their independence, and embark on a mission of creating and developing a new country based on the freedoms, rights, and liberties of which they fought for. The colonist ideals of the revolution are the ideals that continue to guide this nation today. The first and most important battle in the Revolution was the Battle of Lexington and Concord. This battle, fought on April 19, 1775 in the small towns of Lexington and Concord Massachusetts, marked the first military action in the American Revolution (Badertscher). Famous writer Ralph Waldo Emerson described how the “shot heard around the world”, triggered a revolt that would begin the American Revolution and eventually lead to arguably the greatest achievement in American history.

Beginning in 1764, Great Britain had imposed a series of measures aimed at generating revenue in the colonies (History.com). However, it was not until after the passage of the Intolerable Acts 10 years later in 1774 when the unrest in the colonies truly increased. The British government’s heavy “taxation without representation” was both unfair and unlawful to the colonists under their original Bill of Rights established in 1689. Due, in part, to the uprisings in Boston including
both the Boston Tea Party as well as the Boston Massacre, the British Parliament increased its military presence in the colonies, specifically Massachusetts. Due to the observant eye of Patriots including Paul Revere, William Dawes, and Samuel Prescott, they were able to take different routes throughout the towns of Lexington and Concord to discretely warn that the British were on their way to sweep through the cities. In a letter that Paul Revere wrote to Dr. Jeremy Belknap on April 19, 1775, he writes that Dr. Warren forced him to ride to Lexington and inform John Hancock and John Adams that British are coming (Revere Letter).

The battle itself was significant because it showed that the British military, one of the most powerful militaries in the world, were beatable. The battle started when 700 British troops were met by 77 Massachusetts militiamen on the town green of Lexington. Although it is still unknown which side fired first, when the smoke had cleared, eight militiamen lay dead, while only one redcoat was wounded (History.com). Before the British marched onward to Concord, they had started to burn houses and destroy several carriages, carriage wheels, and barrels of flour (Essex Gazette, April 25, 1775).

After the confrontation in Lexington, the British continued to Concord in search of arms, not realizing that there were hundreds of militiamen occupying the strategically important high ground of Concord. The majority of this battle revolved around the blockade of the North Bridge in Concord. The British first fired at the revolting militiamen. When the militiamen fired back, Emerson coined this moment as the “The Shot Heard Around the World” (History.com).
After the majority of the battle had been fought, many of the militiamen had descended into the region for a guerrilla warfare style of battle. The Redcoats had soon begun to abandon their weapons, clothing and equipment so that they could retreat faster into the countryside (History.com). After the Battle, over 40 of the King’s troops had been taken prisoner under the militiamen’s control (The Massachusetts Spy, May 17, 1775). These hostages were eventually taken to Hartford where they would be used as leverage to emphasize to the King that the colonists were quite serious in their objective of war.

The Battle of Lexington and Concord is the most significant battle in the revolution because not only was it the first and pivotal military battle fought between the colonists and the British, but because it proved that the greatest military in the world was beatable, instilling a sense of pride in the colonists, and helping to set the tone for the rest of the war. Although they did not win in a numbers game with the British, nevertheless, they proved that they could fight. It was also important to colonists that an image of British fault and colonist pride maintained in the first military battle with the British. This battle was the spark that the colonists needed in order to set the tone for the rest of the Revolutionary War, and lead the revolt that eventually led to the downfall of the most powerful nation on earth.
Works Cited


