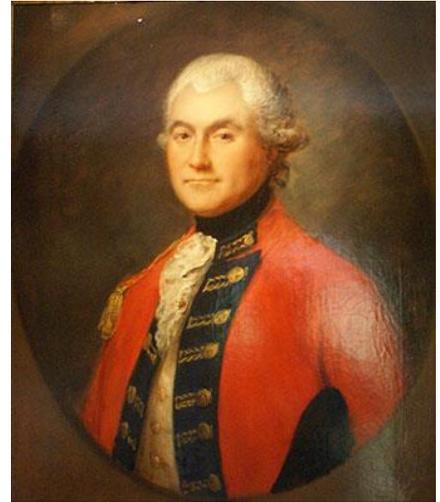


Could the first battle of the American Revolution have started in Marblehead and/or Salem ?

Find out where & how the American Revolution could have started in Marblehead &/or Salem on **February 24, 1775** just 2 months before Lexington & Concord on April 19, 1775

- Trolley tour from Salem to Marblehead and back
 - Saturday, February 24, 2024 11 am to about 12:30
 - Starts & ends at St. Peter's Church in Salem
 - ♦ 24 St. Peter Street, Salem, MA ♦
 - Trolley boarding begins at 10:30 ~ Limited seating.
 - Free / donations welcome. Reservations not needed.
 - First arrivals to fill the trolley will be accommodated.
 - Paid parking in the adjacent lot. Rain or shine or cold.
- In Marblehead:
- 11:15 or 11:20 apx. ~ Trolley arrival in Marblehead
 - Anyone is welcome to join that short walking tour
 - Meeting point: to the right of The Barnacle Restaurant
 - Front Street, near Lovis Cove, just N of Homan's Cove



Private collection, Scotland

Portrait of General Alexander Leslie
(a Colonel in 1774) by Thomas Gainsborough

As the trolley drives, social historian Judy Anderson of Marblehead will provide historical background, discussing distinctive differences between Salem & Marblehead, both during the Revolution and before.

In Marblehead, a 15 to 20-min. outdoor walk along the harbor will start at about 11:20 am on Front Street, right beside Lovis Cove (by The Barnacle Restaurant), near where the British troops are said to have landed.

The group will walk two blocks to the parking lot at Fort Beach, then possibly up to Fort Sewall if weather and temperature permit.

After re-boarding the trolley again, narration on the drive back to Salem will note other sites in Marblehead related to the American Revolution.

More info can be found at the Leslie's Retreat Facebook page, or by calling Marblehead Tours 781-631-1762. <https://www.facebook.com/p/Leslies-Retreat-Salem-Resistance-100064413592881/> (before 10 am on Sat.)

Background ~ and some mysteries:

On a Sunday in late February 1775, a cohort of 240 British Regular Army troops disembarked from a transport ship at an (uncertain) location off Marblehead, then marched to Salem to confiscate cannon that rebels (Patriots) had hidden beyond Salem's North River.

The commotion drew Marbleheaders, who were NEARLY ALL zealous Patriots (for a particular reason), to pour out of the then-populous town's three full churches. Marblehead's defensive militia (a sizeable corps that in February included fishermen not yet out to sea), hurried into formation to follow the red-coat Regulars. In Salem, that town's militia gathered to face them in front of Salem's North River Bridge.

Remarkably, no shots were fired that day, despite a tense debate at the bridge between the British commanding officer Lt. Colonel Leslie and American Colonel David Mason of Salem's rebel militia, along with the wise and prudent minister of Salem's First Church. **That afternoon, cool heads prevailed on both sides.**

Negotiation and compromise avoided the bloodshed that would occur less than two months later on Lexington's Common and at Concord's North Bridge, igniting six long years of hostilities and war.

The British marched ~ or “retreated” ~ back to their ship, with the Marblehead militia close behind. And the two actual battles soon afterward on April 19, 1775 overshadowed the restraint that truly avoided the war’s first skirmish on that cold and snowy February afternoon.
Long after those six years of war, the word “retreat” framed the event in a way that shamed the British.

Where the British actually landed, and who alerted them ~ and how ~ still remain a mystery.

Due to an absence of specific accounts right afterward, and misrepresentation later, questions remain:

- ◆ **Where did the British land ? (And where didn’t they land ?)**
- ◆ **How could 240 British troops expect to march undetected or unchallenged through Marblehead’s crowded maze of streets — in a town that was, at that time, the sixth most populous metropolis in British North America, and not be quickly discovered, and potentially confronted ?!**
- ◆ **How did Salem find out they were coming ? Who warned them ? — And who didn’t ?**

The heroic role of a military messenger from Marblehead was totally invented later, in the 1800s — as another dramatic part of the story appears to have been as well, highlighting a Marbleheader ...

Alternative facts, skewed stories, and outright fabrications are nothing new. ...

Later, a celebratory and well-intentioned “historical” painting from the 1920s depicting the legend further turned a myth into an assumed fact. ...

Images have always been potent shapers of perceived reality, whether actual, or photo-shopped, or now, A.I.

This entire sequence of events was uncannily similar to what happened just two months later ~ on April 19, 1775, when a British contingent marched through Lexington toward Concord, to seize cannon hidden beyond Concord’s North Bridge, but meeting resistance by Lexington’s militia on their town green early that Spring morning, “launching” the American Revolutionary War ... though tensions had been mounting, and colonial acts of resistance had been taking place for several years.

That first deadly skirmish in Lexington between a colonial American militia and the British army sparked eight years of battles, bloodshed, and loss of life and livelihoods, as Britain’s colonies along the North American mainland fought hard, against all odds, to win their independence from tyranny and economic repression (though of course Nova Scotia and Florida would both have very different stories).

***However* ~ That very same April scenario AND outcome could easily have happened in Salem or Marblehead instead on that February Sunday NE of Boston, rather than in the other two towns NW of the occupied capital.**

Learn more about all of this and more on the trolley tour from Salem and back

and also about the social climates in Marblehead, Salem and Massachusetts as the British set off on their futile march to Salem.

And in Marblehead, see where the British are said to have landed ~ (or didn’t).

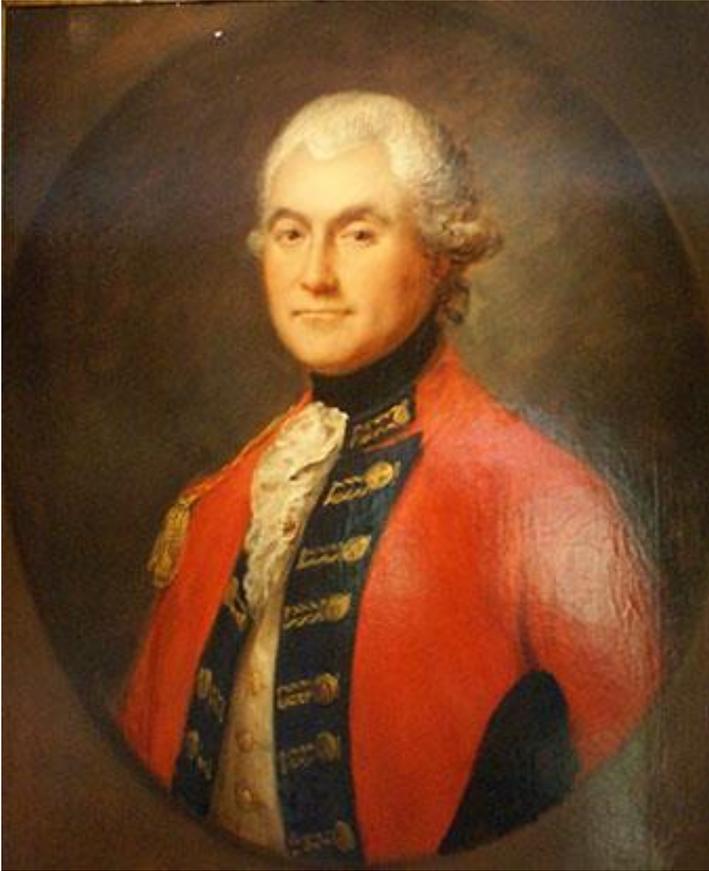
Then join the re-enactment in Salem on Sunday !

The re-enacted confrontation at the drawbridge in Salem on Sunday, February 25, will start at 11 am at Salem’s First Church. Both the Saturday tour and Sunday re-enactment will still happen in inclement weather (though if it’s rain, the re-enactment will move indoors, into the church – and on Saturday, the walk in Marblehead will be shorter).

For more information about the Sunday re-enactment, see

<https://www.facebook.com/p/Leslies-Retreat-Salem-Resistance-100064413592881/>

For more information about the Saturday tour, call 781-631-1762 until 10 am before the trolley tour begins.



Lt. Colonel Alexander Leslie (later General), born in Scotland in **1731**, just a year before both **George Washington** (appointed Commander-in-Chief of the Continental Army on June 15, 1775, two days before the Battle of Breed's / Bunker Hill) and Marblehead's **Colonel John Glover** (promoted to Colonel in May 1775 and General in 1777).

Colonel Glover and General Leslie would face each other in several battles during the late summer and autumn of 1776, before Glover was promoted to General in 1777, after his Marblehead Regiment disbanded following the Crossing of the Delaware River on Christmas night in 1776 (then back again, with Hessian prisoners, after the battle of Trenton).

All three military leaders would serve throughout the war, and would die in the mid-to-late 1790s (A.L. in 1794, J.G. in 1797, G.W. in 1799).

Credit line (must be included in any use of this image):
Portrait of Gen. Alexander Leslie by Thomas Gainsborough
Private collection, Scotland

SATURDAY February 24

10:00am-2:00pm St. Peter's Church - Loyalists in our Midst

Tour the Sanctuary containing General Gage's decorated pew, and hear stories of the Salem Tories.

11:00am-12:30pm Salem-Marblehead Trolley Tour

Take the Salem Trolley to Marblehead for a 90 minute tour of sites related to the landing of the British Regulars and their march to Salem. *(Board the trolley at St. Peter's Church at 10:30am)*

Judy Anderson of Marblehead Architecture & Heritage Tours **info: 781-631-1762**

Co-sponsored with Salem Historical Society

SUNDAY February 25

10:25am First Church Sunday Service with Norumbega Harmony

Sunday service featuring New England's Traditional Early Amercian shape-note Choir

11:30am Sound the Alarm - Community Bell Ringing

Hang your flag, Grab your noise makers, Join local churches for 15 minutes of ringing in the celebration.

11:30am March to North River

Join Captain Felt and others outside of the First Church as they march to the Redcoats.

Redcoats should join Colonel Leslie near the Halstead end of the park at 11:30

(Creative dress encouraged. Free trolley service also available at First Church.)

12:00pm Community Re-enactment at Leslie's Retreat Park

2:00pm First Church - The Inaugural Sarah Tarrant Memorial Lecture

Michele Gabrielson talks about the indispensable role that women in printing played in the pivotal events leading up to the American Revolution.

Co-sponsored with The Bowditch Institute, The Friends of Broad Street Cemetery, League of Women Voters

4pm O'Neill's Pub

Grab a pint and sing 18th century tunes with Larry Young