



The People and Places Program

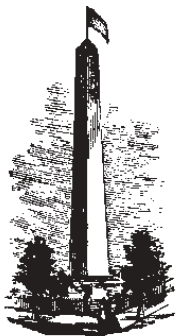
Learning Experiences for
Fourth and Fifth Grade
Students in Boston



Merchants and Farmers in Battle

The People and Places Program is a cooperative program of:
The African Meeting House, Museum of Afro-American
History
Boston African American National Historic Site
Boston National Historical Park
Boston Parks and Recreation Department, Historic Burying
Grounds Initiative
The Boston Public Schools
The Freedom Trail Foundation, Inc.
Old North Church, Christ Church in the City of Boston
Old South Meeting House, The Old South Association in
Boston
Old State House, The Bostonian Society
Paul Revere House, The Paul Revere Memorial Association
USS *Constitution*, United States Navy
USS *Constitution* Museum

The People and Places Program is made possible by these cooperating organizations and by the generosity of the Society of Colonial Wars and John Hancock Company in their grants, to the Freedom Trail Foundation, Inc. and by a grant from the Parks as Classroom program, National Park Service.



WELCOME EDUCATORS

We are pleased that you will be participating in the “Merchants and Farmers in Battle” Program and look forward to your visit to Bunker Hill Monument, a unit of Boston National Historical Park. During your visit, we hope to provide a safe and rewarding experience for all involved. This guide includes information to help you prepare for your visit.

Teachers:

- * Each program component has its own leader, but teacher and chaperone involvement is vital to the success of the program.
- * Your post-visit comments on the enclosed evaluation form will be greatly appreciated.

Curriculum Materials

- * Students who have had pre-trip preparation with enclosed activities will have a more successful visit.

Bus Drop Off and Arrival at the Charlestown Navy Yard

- * Directions and parking information are included for drivers.
- * Please check in with the Park Ranger at the Navy Yard Visitor Center/Bunker Hill Pavilion.

What to Wear

- * The program will take place RAIN OR SHINE! Students and chaperones will be both inside and outside during the program.
Children and adults should:
 - dress in layers
 - wear rubber-soled comfortable shoes (i.e. sneakers) for walking and climbing
 - dress appropriately for sitting on the ground and climbing on stairs.

Lunch

- * There are no indoor lunch facilities. Lawn areas are available for picnics, weather permitting.

Miscellaneous

- * A minimum of one chaperone to seven children is recommended.
- * Restroom facilities are available at the Bunker Hill Monument.
- * In case of cancellations please contact us at least 24 hours in advance by calling (617) 242-5689.
- * The Bunker Hill Monument is not wheelchair-accessible.



Merchants and Farmers in Battle

PROGRAM DESCRIPTION

Students taking part in this two hour program at Bunker Hill Monument explore the lives and motivations of the 18th century colonial soldiers who united to face superior British forces at the Battle of Bunker Hill. A park ranger dressed as an 18th century colonist presents a soldiers perspective of this famous June 17, 1775 battle.

Students learn about the life of an 18th century citizen soldier through a discussion of period clothing and a hands on examination of items from a soldiers pack. Through artifact handling and discussion students find out who these citizen soldiers were and discover that their own lives, dealings and motivations are not so unlike those of the early colonists. After taking part in a mapping exercise shows how the landscape influenced the battle, students gather to watch a skilled ranger perform a musket firing demonstration that brings the sights and sounds of battle to life. In closing, students have an opportunity to climb to the top of the monument to see for themselves the strategic role the hill played in 1775.

THEME AND OBJECTIVES

Theme: *Despite minimal combat experience, limited supplies and problematic terrain, Americans from different backgrounds and motivations united together and committed themselves at the Battle of Bunker Hill in a fight against their own government; by doing so they risked their lives, property and FREEDOM.*

Program Objectives:

After visiting the Park and completing the activities in this guide, students will be able to:

- * identify three things a soldier carried.
- * list three reasons why men came to fight at Bunker Hill.
- * explain why Bunker Hill became so important.
- * define the part geography played in the battle.
- * describe the role the musket played in warfare of the 18th century.
- * compare and contrast the British and Colonial soldiers who fought on Bunker Hill.
- * Give at least one example of how each side viewed the battle differently.



Merchants and Farmers in Battle

Background: *The Battle*

The Revolutionary War started on April 19, 1775, when “the shot heard round the world” was fired at Lexington. By the end of that day, three hundred British soldiers, or “redcoats,” were killed or wounded by the Colonial soldiers, or minutemen, who had attacked them.

Paul Revere and William Dawes’ ride to raise the alarm in the countryside had attracted the militias of many towns. The British were chased back to Boston after Lexington and Concord and Boston was placed under siege. A struggling army of some 7,000 to 10,000 Colonists from New Hampshire, Massachusetts, Rhode Island and Connecticut stretched in a circle around Boston from the Mystic River in the north, through Cambridge and Roxbury, to Dorchester in the south. Confined in the narrow peninsula of Boston were some 4,000 British, with numbers growing from reinforcements that arrived in May and early June. The British were in danger of losing control of even this small part of Massachusetts.

General Thomas Gage, commander of the British forces, was worried that the Colonists might occupy the two high points of land just outside Boston - Bunker Hill to the north and Dorchester Heights to the south. If the Colonists dragged cannons to the top of Bunker’s Hill in Charlestown or Dorchester Heights, they could force the British to leave Boston. In the middle of June, Gage decided to seize both hills and try to push back the Colonial lines.

Word of this British plan reached the military headquarters of the Colonists in Cambridge on June 15. The Colonials decided to move first. On the evening of June 16, Colonel William Prescott and General Israel Putnam, leading 1,200 Massachusetts and Connecticut soldiers, slipped quietly onto Charlestown Peninsula to fortify Bunker’s Hill. For unknown reasons, they moved from this hill and started to dig in on a lower hill closer to Boston called Breed’s Hill. Under the cover of darkness, they began scooping out the earth to build a redoubt. The redoubt was a crude fort formed by digging a deep ditch in the shape of a square and piling up the dirt behind the ditch to form an eight-foot high wall.

As dawn broke on June 17, a British ship discovered the redoubt and opened fire. Gage ordered the hill captured. Parts of six regiments - 1,500 men - crossed the Charles River landing east of Breed’s Hill. It took several hours to bring these troops over the water from Boston for the attack. Prescott used the time wisely, extending his lines and sending back to Cambridge for reinforcements. Colonel John Stark and two New Hampshire regiments arrived and fortified the rail fence on the north side of Breed’s Hill by the Mystic River. To cover the space between Stark’s men and the earthworks, Prescott sent Captain Thomas Knowlton and two hundred Connecticut men who built fleches to fill the gap. Other soldiers took up positions in Charlestown on the south side of Breed’s Hill as snipers to block the advance there. In all, between two and four thousand New Englanders manned the lines.

Sir William Howe, commanding the British force, studied the redoubt and sent back to Boston for reinforcements: the 47th Regiment and a battalion of Marines under Major John Pitcairn. This added 700 troops to the attacking force which totaled about 2,200. Howe moved his men forward into action about 3:00 (pm). The light infantry and grenadiers would hit Stark’s men, push them out of



Merchants and Farmers in Battle

Background: *The Battle continued*

the way and get behind the redoubt, cutting off Prescott's men from retreat and reinforcement. The rest of the force would divert the Colonials attention by marching up the east slope of Breed's Hill.

The British soldiers on the shore got the order to move and the assault started - long lines of scarlet and white-coated soldiers, three-deep, climbing slowly toward the redoubt on the hill. In response to the British assault, both Prescott and Stark wanted an effective result when their men shot their muskets. This meant that soldiers had to hold their fire until the British were so close that the Colonials could not miss. Nobody knows today if anyone actually said the famous quote, "Don't fire 'till you see the whites of their eyes!" But, the men were told not to fire before they were ordered to and when they did fire, to pick off the fancy-dressed officers.

The Colonials fired when the British were less than fifteen paces from the lines. The redcoats tried to stand and shoot, but they were hit again and again. Those in front, privates and officers alike, fell over in piles. It was hailing bullets. The British broke their ranks and ran. A second attack at 4:00-(pm) was no more successful for the British than the first. More British dead and wounded were on the ground. Still determined to take the hill, the British lined up for a third attack. More troops came from Boston to help. Sir William Howe, the British commander, moved these men with the survivors of the previous assaults to the left side of the hill to concentrate on taking the redoubt. Unknown to him, the Colonials under the command of Prescott were outnumbered and low on ammunition.

The third attack came up Breed's Hill on three sides of the redoubt at 4:30 (pm). The Colonials met it with another deadly, but brief, volley. Then, their powder for shooting the muskets was gone. The British Marines, with bayonets fixed, swarmed into the redoubt. The embattled Colonials swung their muskets like clubs and even threw stones, but the Marines killed or wounded 50 Colonials within minutes. Prescott saw that the end had come and ordered the Colonials to retreat from the hill to Cambridge.



It was now after 5:00 (pm) on June 17, 1775, and the British had won the battle which we now call the Battle of Bunker Hill. Howe might have scattered the entire New England army and have ended the American Revolution had he pushed on three miles further to Cambridge, but neither he or his men were in a mood to fight anymore. Howe had lost nearly half of his men, with 226 killed and 828 wounded. He wrote, "When I look to the consequences of it...I do so with horror. The success is too dearly bought."

Colonial losses were between 400 and 600 out of the 3,000 to 4,000 men who actually fought. The Colonials had lost control of the hill to the British, but had proved they could stand up to the British in an open field battle. Stronger leadership, and proper training and supplies would be needed for success in future battles. The leadership came when George Washington became Commander-in-Chief of the new American Army on July 3, 1775. The training came from eight more years of fighting to win independence for America.



Merchants and Farmers in Battle

Background: *The Musket*

Both British and Colonial soldiers used the same firearm at the Battle for Bunker's Hill. This was the musket nicknamed the "Brown Bess." The firearm's real name was a Short Land Pattern Smooth-bore Musket. It weighed 10 pounds and was about 58 inches long. The musket fired a lead ball 3/4 of an inch wide, nearly as wide as an adult's thumb. Smooth-bore means that the barrel was a piece of smooth metal like a piece of pipe. This makes the musket, which is very different from a rifle with grooves cut in the barrel, slower to load. The musket could be loaded and fired five times a minute by trained soldiers while the rifle could be fired only twice a minute. But, while faster to load than a rifle, the musket was also inaccurate. A British officer who fought in America during the Revolutionary War stated that the musket could hit a man at 80 yards, but "As to firing at a man at 200 yards with a musket, you may as well fire at the moon..." The same officer went on to say that accurate shooting with the rifle at 300 yards was much easier.

Because the musket was inaccurate, British troops would stand shoulder to shoulder in large groups called ranks when they attacked an enemy. Long lines of soldiers, firing together at close range, meant you had a better chance of hitting a target than if each soldier fired his musket alone. Good discipline and the ability to shoot the musket quickly was important in open field fighting. The British soldiers were well trained in this kind of fighting and had won many battles over the years.

Can you imagine what it would be like to fight a battle like this? Marching up Breed's Hill to attack the Colonials or seeing the British approach the redoubt? What steps would you go through to fire your musket: How would you feel and look as you fired your musket and fought the battle? Think about these things as you read the following account of what happened to these soldiers during the battle at Bunker Hill.

Marching up the hill, the order is finally given to fire the musket. Your musket is already loaded, you pull the trigger. The flint hits steel, the powder in the pan flashes and, a moment later, the main charge explodes. You feel the heavy kick to your shoulder as the lead ball is punched out of the barrel in a cloud of thick, white smoke. Officers bellow the commands to reload. You listen to the commands - "Open Pan, " "Load, " "Draw Rammer," - along with dozens of sweating comrades. Ignoring the billows of smoke and the screams of men shot around you, you just load and fire, load and fire. Both friends on either side are shot and fall to the ground, but others from the rear ranks move up to fill the gaps. Your face is black and stinging from the powder flash in the pan next to your cheek, your eyes burn from the smoke. You listen to the commands and hope that the next time you pull the trigger, the musket will not refuse to fire. You also hope that you stay alive and unhurt.



Merchants and Farmers in Battle

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Words to Know

Breastworks	A wall usually made out of earth and used as a barrier
Fleches	Dirt walls built in a “V” shape towards the side where the enemy would approach - they were open to the rear.
Howe, William	Commanding the British forces during the battle, Howe personally led his men during all three assaults on Breed’s Hill during the Battle for Bunker’s Hill. Although all twelve of his aides were killed or wounded, not one bullet hit Howe. He went on to become Commander-in-Chief of all British forces in North America.
Peninsula	Long, narrow projection of land surrounded by water on three sides and connected to the mainland by a narrow neck of land.
Pitcairn, John	Pitcairn also led his Marines up the hill in all three attacks. Twice wounded in the first two attacks, he finally reached the redoubt and was mortally wounded. Carried to the shore by his son, he died that night in Boston. He was well liked by patriots and loyalists alike in Massachusetts. His son later named Pitcairn’s Island in the Pacific Ocean for his father.
Poor, Salem	African-American colonial soldier who was given special recognition after the battle for his bravery on the battlefield.
Prescott, William	Prescott led the men that built the redoubt on Breed’s Hill and fought in and around the redoubt. According to legend, he gave the order, “Don’t fire ‘till you see the whites of their eyes.” When the British captured the hill, he was able to retreat to safety with most of his men.
Putnam, Israel	“Old Put” was the general in charge of the Connecticut soldiers in the New England army. According to legend, he was responsible for moving the site of the redoubt from Bunker’s Hill to Breed’s Hill.
Redoubt	A small fort with dirt walls.
Regiment	A military unit of soldiers made up of companies. A British regiment had 10 companies totaling about 800 men at full strength. Colonial regiments at Bunker’s Hill averaged about 300 men. The words regiment and battalion during the Revolutionary War meant the same thing.



Words to Know

continued

Siege

Surrounding and cutting off supplies to a town or fort by an army that want to capture it.

Stark, John

Ordered to march two regiments of New Hampshire troops to Breed's Hill, Stark had his men fortify the north side of the hill by the Mystic River. This kept General Howe and the British from getting behind the redoubt. Following Prescott's retreat from the redoubt, Stark and his men held back the British allowing most of the Colonials to escape.

Warren, Joseph

Doctor and patriot leader who helped create the American colonial army and was elected a Major-General. Gave the order for the troops to fortify Charlestown. Warren was killed fighting as a regular soldier during the battle. The first monument on the battle site was dedicated to him in 1794.



Merchants and Farmers in Battle

Pre- Visit Activities

Between 2,000 and 4,000 Colonial and about 2300 British troops, including artillery, fought in the Battle for Bunker's Hill (fought on Breed's Hill) and many more private citizens watched from the rooftops and wharves of Boston. Despite that fact, only a dozen known written and eyewitness descriptions of the battle survive.

Of those accounts which remain, only a handful are American; the British hold the honors as far as total number of letters and reports about the battle. One major difference is that all of the British accounts were written by officers while the best letters on the American side were written by the common soldier.

These materials provide edited excerpts from two letters; the viewpoint of a British officer of the Marines and a Colonial farmer/soldier in Colonel Prescott's regiment.

ACTIVITY

Historians have a difficult job sometimes piecing together all of the facts of what happened after a major event such as the Battle of Bunker Hill. In the 18th century many people could not read and write and this limited the number of written accounts. Also, some additional written accounts of the Battle of Bunker Hill may exist but remain undiscovered in an attic somewhere. Old journals and letters may also have been thrown out or burned in house fires in the many years since the battle.

Often times accounts of the same event can be very different. They can depend on who wrote the description, who they are writing to and where they were during the event.

Read the two letters aloud with the class and compare them. Discuss the differences between the two men who wrote the letters. Introduce the class to the idea of different perspectives.

- * How are the stories alike?
- * How do the accounts differ?
- * Why do you think the descriptions in the two letters are different?
- * Why do you think there aren't more written accounts of the 1775 battle that have survived?

ACTIVITY

Select three students. Have them briefly write a description of the front wall of the classroom. Compare with the class the differences and similarities of each student's description.



Merchants and Farmers in Battle

Selected Opinions: British Soldier

The following is a shortened version of the letter a British Marine officer, John Waller, wrote to his brother. Lieutenant Waller came from a well-to-do family in Gloucester, England. He was a professional soldier.

Camp of Charlestown Heights,

22 June 1775

My Dear Brother,

In the middle of the hurry and confusion of a camp hastily pitched in the field of battle, I am sitting down to tell you that I have escaped unhurt, where many, very many, have fallen. I can only say that it was a most desperate and daring attempt, and it was performed with as much gallantry and spirits as was ever shown by any troops in any age.

Two company of the first battalion of Marines, and part of the 47th regiment were the first that mounted the wall of the redoubt. Nothing could be more shocking than the carnage that followed the storming of this wall. We tumbled over the dead to get at the living who were coming out of the opening of the redoubt. The rebels had five thousand to seven thousand men, given cover by a redoubt, walls, hedges and trees. The number of soldiers under General Howe did not amount to fifteen hundred. We gained a complete victory, and entrenched ourselves that night where we lay ready to fight again if needed.

Of our group, we had one Major, two captains and three lieutenants killed; four captains and three lieutenants wounded; two sergeants, and twenty-one rank and file killed; and three sergeants and seventy-nine privates wounded. On the whole, I suppose we lost, killed and wounded, from eight hundred to one thousand men. We killed a number of the rebels, but the cover they fought under made their loss less considerable than it would otherwise have been. The army is in great spirits, and full of rage and ferocity at the rebellious rascals who both poisoned and chewed the musketballs, in order to make them more fatal. Many officers have died of their wounds, and others very ill. It is astonishing what a number of officers were hit on this occasion, but the officers were particularly aimed at.

I did not think at one time that I should ever have been able to write this, though in the heat of the action, I thought nothing of the matter.

Good bye, dear Jacob, yours,

J. Waller



Merchants and Farmers in Battle

Selected Opinions: American Soldier

The following is a shortened version of the letter an Colonial soldier, Peter Brown, wrote to his mother. Peter Brown was a farmer in Westford, Massachusetts, by profession and fought the battle under Colonel Prescott.

Cambridge, June 28, 1775

Friday, the 16th of June, we were ordered to parade at 6:00 (pm) with one day's provisions and blankets ready for a march somewhere, but we did not know where. So we readied and cheerfully obeyed. About 9:00 (pm) we marched down on to Charlestown Hill where we entrenched and made a fort of about ten rod long and eight wide. We worked there undiscovered by the British until about 5:00 (am) in the morning and then we saw our danger being against 8 ships of the line and all Boston fortified against us.

The danger we were in made us think there was treachery, and that we were brought there to be slain. I must and will venture to say that was treachery, oversight or presumption in the conduct of our officers. At about 5:30 in the morning, we not having about half the fort done, the British began to fire. They killed one of us, and then ceased until about 11:00. They then began pretty briskly again and that caused some of our young country people to desert apprehending danger in a clearer manner than the rest who were more diligent in digging and fortifying ourselves against the British. We began to be almost beat out, being tired by our labor and having no sleep the night before, with little food and no drink but rum.

It being about 3:00 in the afternoon, there was a little cessation of the cannons roaring. Come to look, there were 40 barges full of Regular British soldiers coming over to us. The enemy landed and formed themselves in a oblong square, so as to surround us, which they did in part. After they were well formed, they advanced towards us in order to swallow us up. The ships kept firing and throwing bombs to keep us down till the soldiers got almost around us. But, God in mercy to us fought our battle for us and although we were but few and so were suffered to be defeated by them, we were preserved in a most wonderful manner far beyond expectation. Out of our regiment, there was about 37 killed, 4 or 5 taken captive and about 47 wounded.

If we should be called into action, again, I hope to have courage and strength to act my part valiantly in defense of our liberties and our country, trusting in him who hath yet kept me and hath covered by head in the day of battle. I was in the fort till the Regulars came in and I jumped over the walls, and ran for about half a mile where balls flew like hailstones and cannons roared like thunder.

Your dutiful Son

Peter Brown



Merchants and Farmers in Battle

Maps

Maps show us where things like towns, rivers and hills are located. Maps are important because they let people today know how things looked in the past. In 1775, when the battle of Bunker Hill was fought, Boston was a town of only 20,000 people on a narrow peninsula overlooked by hills on the nearby shores. Without maps showing us the area as it looked in 1775, we would have a hard time understanding why these hills were important to the colonists and the British. The following maps show the Boston area and the Charlestown peninsula as they appeared on June 17, 1775, the day of the battle. First look at the Boston area map. Can you find Bunker Hill, Breed's Hill and Dorchester Heights? If you were a colonist, why would you want to drag cannon to the top of Bunker Hill or Breed'd Hill? Why did the British generals want to have their men keep the Colonials off these hills? Why are hills so important to an army fighting in battle?

Now look at the map of Charlestown Peninsula. The Colonists built a crude fort called a redoubt and fortified a rail fence and stone wall. Can you find where these fortifications are on the map? The British made three attacks against these fortifications; use the map to find out where those attacks took place. The town of Charlestown was burned to the ground by the British during the battle. Find the town and ask yourself why the British burned the town? How did that help them to win the battle?

Follow the maps as you read about the battle in the section called "Background: The Battle." The maps will it easier to understand the battle. Bring your maps with you when your class visits Bunker Hill so that you can compare the features on the map of 1775 to the topography of today.

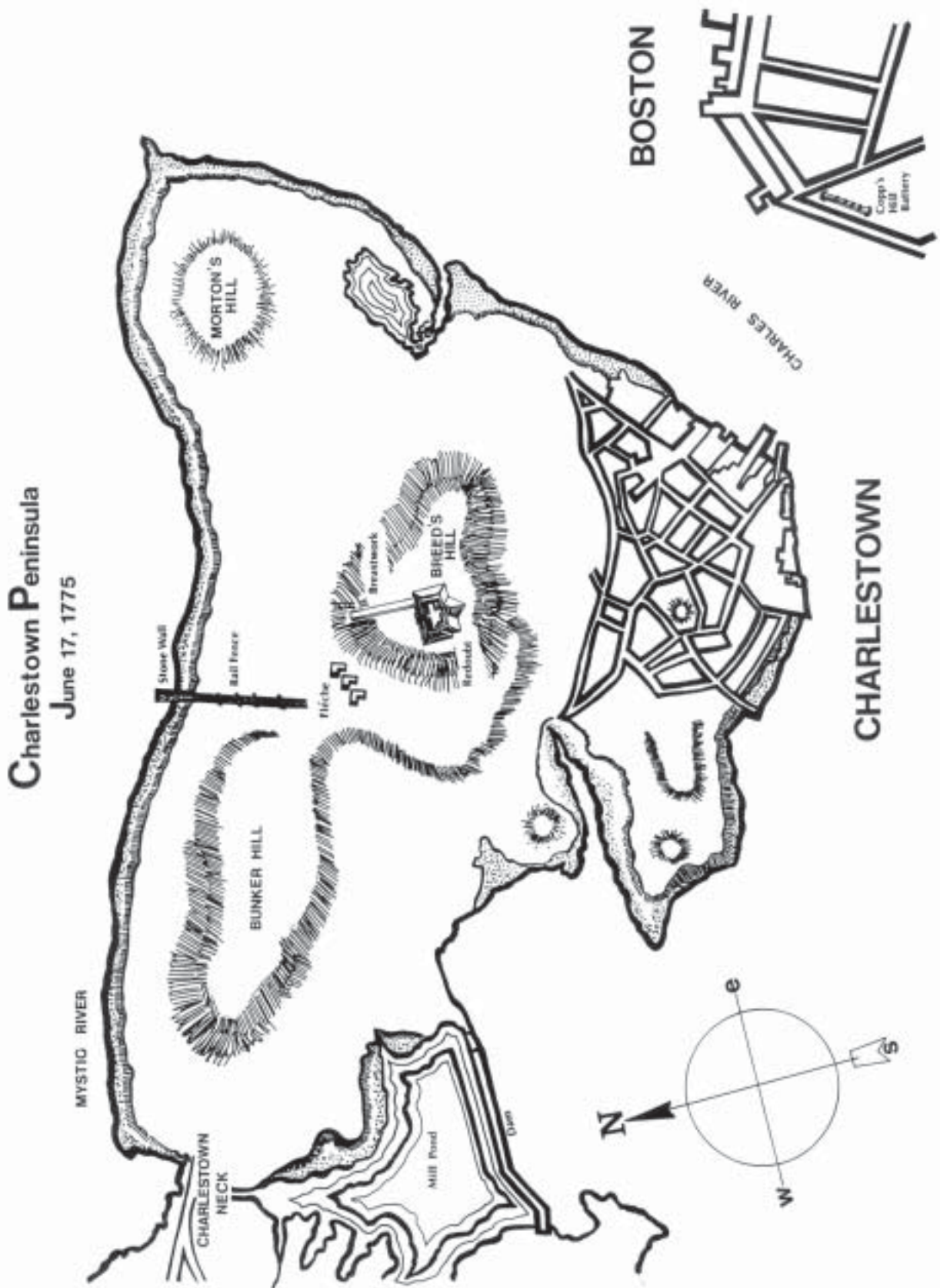


Map 1

Boston Area 1775



Map 2





Merchants and Farmers in Battle

Post- Visit Activities

Letter to the local newspaper

Fifty years after the battle a group of people have decided to erect a monument to the battle. Money needs to be raised and the public must support it. Have each student write a letter to a fictional local newspaper explaining to the public the importance of the battle and why a monument should be built.

Pack a Bag

Each student will take the role of a soldier and must pack a bag for travel. The student is limited to carrying thirty pounds of material and must carry a musket (10.5lbs) cartidge pouch with gun powder and musket balls (3 lbs) and water (3 lbs 4 oz). From the list below have each student decide which items and how many they will bring with them to battle.

16 oz = 1 lb

shirt,	1 lb	bible,	4 lb
pants,	2 lb 4 oz	book,	2 lb
socks,	4 oz	cup,	1 lb
shoes,	2 lb	spoon,	8 oz
coat,	3 lb 8 oz	knife,	8 oz
hat,	1 lb	food,	5 lb
underwear,	8 oz	penneywhistle,	8 oz
blanket,	3 lb 8 oz	jawharp,	8 oz
toothbrush,	2 oz	quill pen,	1 oz
toothpaste,	8 oz	ink,	4 oz
comb,	2 oz	paper,	4 oz
brush,	12 oz	journal,	1 lb
gloves,	12 oz	playing cards,	6 oz
soap,	8 oz	dice,	1 oz
bandanna,	2 oz	marbles,	1 lb