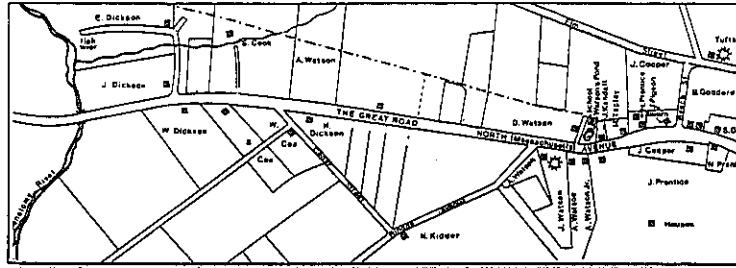


Watson's Corner



British troops were unopposed when they crossed Watson's Plain on their way to Concord and Lexington on April 18, 1775, but on their return the next day they fought a bitter skirmish here that left four patriots dead.

On this site stood a house built by John Watson in the 1660s and rebuilt by his son Jacob about 1710. Watson's descendants owned much of the land in this neighborhood, and the intersection of Rindge Avenue and Massachusetts Avenue was known as Watson's Corner. It became the scene of bloodshed on April 19, 1775, the day of "the shot heard 'round the world."

On the night of April 18, 1775, Paul Revere's compatriot, William Dawes, passed Watson's Corner on his way to warn the Sons of Liberty that the British were coming to seize military stores hidden in Concord. By the next morning, the countryside was prepared for battle. The British overpowered the Minutemen on Lexington Common and pressed on to Concord, only to be ambushed again and forced to retreat.

The British had to flee back to Boston along today's Massachusetts Avenue, which bristled with Minutemen, militia, and farmers awaiting a chance to harass the "redcoats." At Watson's Corner, several older men from Cambridge and Brookline positioned themselves behind a barricade of dry casks in the yard of the Watson house. Isaac Gardner, John Hicks, and Moses Richardson were bayoneted by British troops, while simple-minded William Marcy, who thought he was seeing a parade, was shot as he sat on a wall and cheered.

The British column barely paused before swinging left onto Beech Street, continuing its retreat down Somerville Avenue to safety in Charlestown. Hicks, Richardson, and Marcy were buried in an unmarked grave and were soon forgotten as Cambridge became an armed camp of several

thousand minutemen gathered from all over New England to oppose the British.

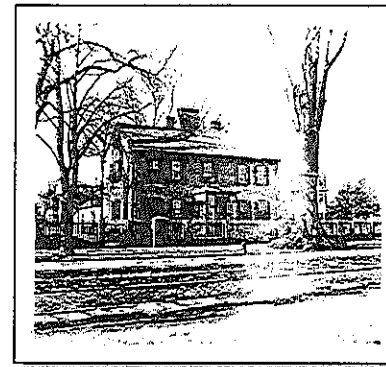
In 1875, the patriot's common grave was found in the Old Burying Ground, and monuments were erected there and in front of the Watson house at 2154 Massachusetts Avenue. The house itself was razed in 1921, despite efforts to preserve it as a memorial of the first battle of the American Revolution.

Sources:

Cambridge Historical Commission. *Report Five: Northwest Cambridge*. Cambridge, 1977.
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After the battle, Jacob Watson's house was used as a field hospital; the city erected the granite marker commemorating the event in 1876.

