

## **Capt. John Trull, Minuteman**

Capt. John Trull, Captain of the Tewksbury Minutemen, received a message during the night of April 18-19, 1775. It is probable that he was told by a man on horseback that the British were marching.

Owner of about 200 acres in North Tewksbury, he lived in a farmhouse on what is today called River Road Hill. There was a field nearby, a pasture, in which the Minutemen had drilled. That farmhouse burned, about 1912, but about 135 acres of the farm are today known as the Trull Golf Course.

The farmhouse overlooked the Merrimack River. Across the river was the town of Dracut, and the home of Captain (later General) Varnum, of the Dracut Minutemen.

Capt. Trull knew what to do. It is to be believed he already had his orders, arranged by the Massachusetts Committee on Safety. Sam Adams was one of the organizers, and the people of the colony were ready for a march by the British to such a place as had military stores, such as Concord.

Trull, quite obviously in accordance with previous orders, took his gun outside and fired three shots. Across the river those shots were heard by Capt. Varnum, and he, too, knew what to do.

The individual Minutemen captains had their orders. Those of Trull and Varnum were probably the same as the captains of Reading, Wilmington and Billerica - march to Bedford where Capt. Ebenezer Bridge of Billerica will take command and give orders.

Remember the Midnight Ride of Paul Revere?

It wasn't the only thing that happened that night. As the British troops marched toward Lexington there were officers who heard guns being fired, and church bells being rung. The countryside was being alarmed.

And Paul Revere was not the only man who rode.

Revere got his horse that night from a man named Richard Devens. Devens was chairman of the Charlestown Committee on Safety.

Devens quite probably furnished horses to other riders, that same night. Some one must have ridden to Essex County towns. Minutemen of Andover marched across Tewksbury in the early hours of the morning, and Minutemen of Danvers joined in the fighting as the British retreated, somewhere in the modern town of Arlington.

Just look at the Town Seal of Tewksbury.

A rider on horseback is shown near the center of Tewksbury and the church which marked that center. The ancient tradition is that he is the person who warned the town that the British were marching.

No one knows who he was. It is possible that it was he who warned Capt. Cadwallader Ford of Wilmington. It is also possible that he rode on to the home of Capt. Trull and then possibly to Chelmsford.

Bruce Morang, distinguished Reading editor, has carefully researched the history of his town on that night. It is he who tells the tale of Dr. Martin Herrick, 28-year-old physician, of Precinct Two, now North Reading.

Dr. Herrick received his information from no less a person than Paul Revere, on that night. He rode on, into Woburn and Stoneham, then to LinnEnd (Lynnfield) and Reading, passing the alarm. The end of his ride was at the Gowing Tavern, from which he rode home, then he joined his company of militia and marched.

And, like others, Capt. John Trull was a man who helped spread the word that the British were out, and then marched to join the fighting. But there is even more, in his case.

It is on record that a New Hampshire company of soldiers was in Cambridge after the fighting on April 19. That company had marched and had run for over 50 miles, to do its part, and did its duty in the siege of Boston, which started that night.

Who sent the word to a company of soldiers over 50 miles away? How did they know it was time to march?

It is impossible to say. No one knows.

John Trull, with his three rifle shots, warned Dracut, a town that borders New Hampshire. Were those rifle shots repeated, across New Hampshire, to warn those New Hampshire men who marched, as well as those from Maine, who later marched?