

# 1776

## The Musical

**March 13-15, 2025**

**Fridays & Saturdays at 7:30 pm**

**Sundays at 2:00 pm**

**Historic Thalian Hall**

**310 Chestnut St, Wilmington, NC**



This award-winning musical explores the amazing history behind the Declaration of Independence and the creation of the United States of America. Experience the birth of a nation like never before in 1776 the Musical, a bold and witty retelling of America's fight for independence. As tensions rise in the Second Continental Congress, John Adams, Thomas Jefferson, and Benjamin Franklin struggle to persuade a divided nation to declare freedom from British rule. With a Tony Award-winning score and a fresh, thought-provoking perspective, this powerful production brings history to life with humor, heart, and relevance for today. Thalian Association Community Theatre is proud to co-produce 1776 the Musical with Thalian Hall to celebrate America 250! Don't miss this rousing journey to the signing of the Declaration of Independence!

## About the Thalian Association

Thalian Association Community Theatre is a non-profit membership organization that's dedicated to enhancing the rich artistic environment of the Cape Fear region. Tracing its roots back to 1788, the Thalian Association Community Theatre was founded to provide arts education and bring the excitement of the performing arts to Wilmington, North Carolina. Today the Thalian Association Community Theatre produces five major productions annually on the Main Stage at historic Thalian Hall, offers a Youth Theatre program and professionally manages the Hannah Block Historic USO/Community Arts Center for the City of Wilmington. In 2007, the North Carolina legislature named the Thalian Association Community Theatre the Official Community Theater of North Carolina.



# The Real Story Behind the Events of 1776

*1776: The Musical* revolves around the historic events of that year when the colonies of America officially declared independence from Britain. Read the following passages to reveal more about the main characters of 1776 and the key players behind America's fight for independence!

## What Led to the Events of 1776?

Colonists in America were frustrated with Britain's governance long before 1776. In the mid-1750s, France and Britain began to argue over land in North America. This eventually became the Seven Years' War, and the fighting eventually spread across Europe and the Americas. Most of the major world powers of that time were involved in the fighting. Britain, in deep debt after the Seven Years' War ended in 1763, began passing a series of acts that led to increased taxes for the colonists in America. The colonists argued that they should not be taxed since they had no direct representatives in the British Parliament. The colonists believed this taxation without representation went against what was written in Britain's own constitution.

Tensions reached a boiling point in 1773 when the British government backed the East India Trading Company to create the Tea Act, allowing the Company to sell tea to the colonies for a low price by skirting most of the taxes on imported goods. This plan was meant to help the struggling Company make money and compete with cheaper, poor-quality tea smuggled into the colonies through Dutch trade routes. The East India Trading Company sought to establish a British monopoly on the sale of tea in the colonies.

These restrictions on tea, a popular drink that was a vital import for the colonists, led to uprisings that eventually caused the Boston Tea Party. During December 1773, colonists snuck onto several British ships docked in Boston Harbor and threw the entire shipment of tea overboard.



*The Death of General Wolfe* by Benjamin West illustrates a crucial battle in the Seven Years' War.



Engraving of the Boston Tea Party from 1789.

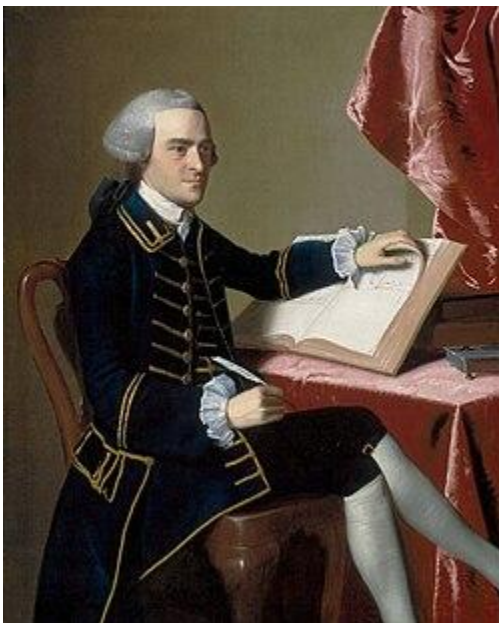
This act of protest sparked similar Tea Parties in other colonies, though some of the other ships were simply blocked from unloading their cargo and returned to Britain without having the tea destroyed.

In response to the colonists' Tea Parties, especially the destruction of the tea in Boston, Britain passed the Intolerable Acts in 1774. These acts were a collection of laws meant to punish the colonies for their revolt. The acts closed the port of Boston and denied the colony of Massachusetts the self-governance that it had enjoyed since its inception. Instead of scaring the colonies back into the arms of Britain and King George III, these acts only served to infuriate the colonists more, leading them to unite behind the colony of Massachusetts and declare their support for the radical colony in case it was attacked by Britain. This would be crucial soon, as in April 1775 the colonists received word that the British troops were mobilizing.



A depiction of Paul Revere on his famous midnight ride.

On April 18, 1775, the British army leaders had planned to sneakily attack during the night to burn supplies and seize weapons belonging to the colonies' militias. They also set out to

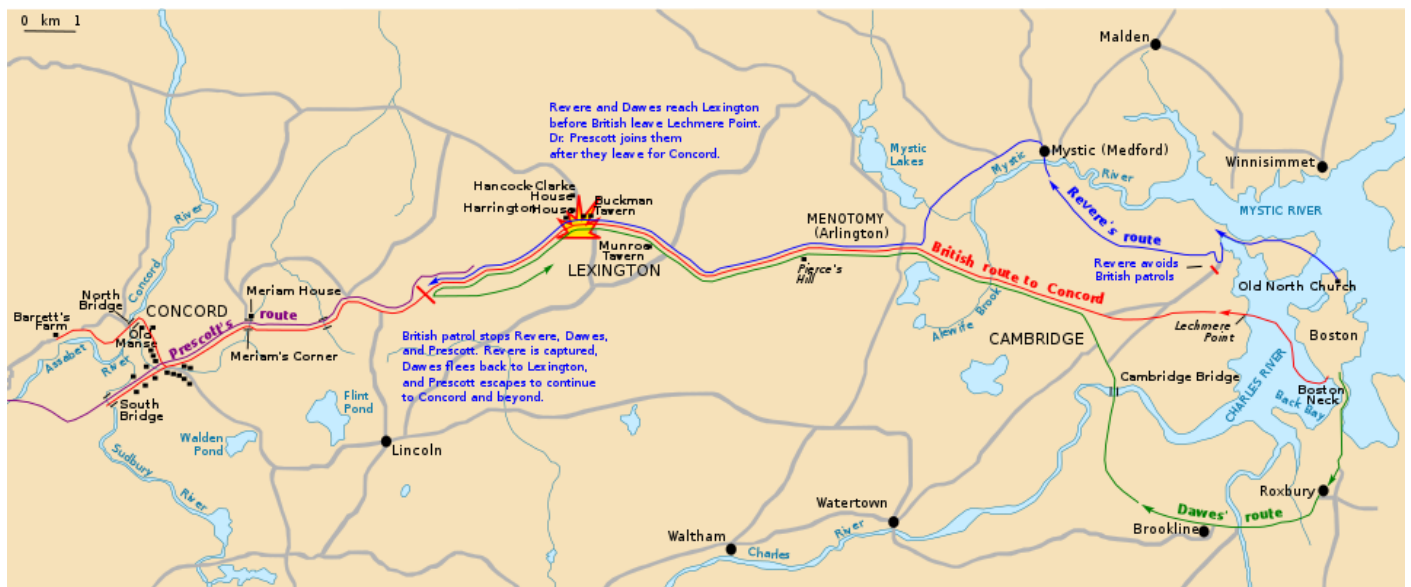


Portrait of John Hancock by John Singleton Copley circa 1765. Hancock was a leader of the revolutionary colonists and became one of the Founding Fathers of the United States.

capture the Patriot leaders including John Hancock and Samuel Adams. The British intended to take the sleeping colonists by surprise and strip them of their supplies, weapons, and leaders to prevent the outbreak of all-out war. Unfortunately for the British, the plans were leaked to the colonists and word quickly spread thanks to midnight riders like Paul Revere sent to raise the alarm.

As soon as the colonists learned of the British threat, Paul Revere and two other midnight riders named Samuel Prescott and William Dawes were dispatched to ride through the colony of Massachusetts, waking up the local militiamen and warning inhabitants of the incoming British soldiers. As the British troops made their way through the colony they were met with thousands of angry colonists and militiamen, resulting in the Battles of Lexington and Concord and the start of the war for American Independence.





A National Park Service map showing the routes of the three midnight riders and the march of the British soldiers.

### Interactive Map of Paul Revere's Route

Navigate to [paulreverehouse.org/interactive-map-midnight-rides/](http://paulreverehouse.org/interactive-map-midnight-rides/) to follow Paul Revere's route through the colony of Massachusetts on his famous midnight ride!



Paul Revere was ultimately captured by the British, but he still managed to warn many towns about the incoming British soldiers. As the fighting between the colonies and Britain became increasingly serious during 1775, the leaders of the colonies were forced to decide if they would unite to fight Britain together. This is where *1776: The Musical* begins - the first scene opens during a meeting between the leaders of the thirteen colonies known as the Continental Congress. John Adams, a delegate from Massachusetts, is trying to convince the other delegates to vote for independence from British rule. However, the other delegates are not convinced that a war for independence is the best way forward. Remember this backstory when you go to see *1776: The Musical*!



Portrait of John Adams by Gilbert Stuart circa 1800-1815.

## Reading Questions

Answer the following questions using the information you have learned from the passages above. Write your answer using complete sentences.

1. What pivotal event happened in Boston during December of 1773?
2. Who was the East India Trading Company? Why did the British government back them?
3. What were the Intolerable Acts? Why did they make the American colonists angry?
4. What did the British army plan to do in April 1775? What happened instead?
5. Who was Paul Revere? Why was his midnight ride so important for the colonists?

## Paul Revere's Midnight Ride Coloring Sheet

Bring Paul Revere's midnight ride to life!

