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Courage is resistance to fear, mastery of fear, not absence of fear.
~Mark Twain

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The Night that Began a Revolution

By Tins Norris Fields

We all know the story of Paul Revere. Of course we do. “Listen my children and you shall hear Of the midnight ride of Paul Revere. ‘On the eighteenth of April in Seventy-Five, hardly a man is still alive who remembers that famous day and year.” We remember our parents or grandparents or teachers reading us that famous poem by Henry Wadsworth Longfellow. So, we know the story. Right?

Well, no, we only know part of the story. If we really want to know what Paul Harvey used to call “the rest of the story,” we need to hear Gordon Lichty tell the story, show us the maps, and demonstrate the weapons that were all part of this pivotal moment in American history.

Ever since the “intolerable acts” of King George II of England toward the American colonies, such as the Stamp Act, unrest was brewing. And after the Boston Tea Party, British military retribution against the colonies had been growing. Quietly, strategically, and in well-guarded secrecy, resistance was being carefully planned. Sam Adams, John Hancock, Dr. Joseph Warren, and Paul Revere were key figures in the patient, disciplined, and determined leadership that built a network of volunteers ready to face the tasks that lay ahead. The Sons of Liberty met under Liberty Trees and in other secret locations.

No, I’m not going to try to tell you the whole story. I can’t do the job that Gordon Lichty does. He is a professional historical interpreter from Fort Michilimackinac, with a profound knowledge of this nation’s early days, its culture, its social and economic struggles, and its wars.

On Thursday, August 13, 2026, at the Elk Rapids Historical Museum, located in the building that formerly housed the Elk Rapids United Methodist Church, hosted by the Cruisin’ Pirates Car Club, Gordon Lichty presented the story of the Night that Began a Revolution. Dressed in period attire as a 1775 man, yet using audio-visual tools of 2026, he laid out for us the story behind the story, the planning, the life and death need for secrecy, the maps of the stand-offs and the running battle. He showed us the “witness houses” on Battle Road where colonists and British regulars struggled and fought, and many died. Many of those houses still stand and are owned by seventh generation descendants of the original owners. He showed us rifles of that time and demonstrated how they would be used.

If you ever have the opportunity to attend one of Gordon Lichty’s historical presentations, be sure to do it. It will be well worth your time.



Above - Gordon Lichty tells the story that led to the battles at Lexington and Concord
Below - Gordon explains the meaning of the markings on the rifle



Above - Rifles of the era, including a British Brown Bess that did not see combat
Below - Artifacts of the time

