

Declaring Independence

One American's Story

No one knows who warned the colonists about the British plan to march on Concord. But suspicion has always fallen on Margaret Kemble Gage, the American-born wife of British General Thomas Gage. Despite her husband's lofty position as commander-in-chief of the British army in America, Margaret's loyalty remained torn between England and America. Explaining her mixed feelings about the war, Margaret Gage quoted Blanche from Shakespeare's play *King John*:

PRIMARY SOURCE

“The Sun's o'ercast with blood: fair day, adieu!
Which is the side that I must go withal?
I am with both: each army hath a hand;
And in their rage, I having hold of both,
They whirl asunder and dismember me . . .
Whoever wins, on that side shall I lose.
Assured loss, before the match be played.”

— Margaret Kemble Gage, quoted in *Paul Revere's Ride*

After the British retreat at Lexington and Concord, even Margaret's husband suspected his wife had revealed the secret plans. Fearing she might do the same again, Gage sent his wife back to England. Like many others, Margaret Gage was forced to make difficult choices as the conflict began to spread.

The Siege of Boston

KEY QUESTION What events led to the Battle of Bunker Hill?

After the fighting at Lexington and Concord, British troops retreated to safety in Boston. As General Gage considered his next move, over 15,000 militiamen from all over New England surrounded the town. Boston was now



Margaret Kemble Gage
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