

## FOR STUDENT READERS

The militia muster, *One Pound of Gunpowder, Two Pounds of Lead*, will take place between 9:30 a.m. and 5 p.m. on Saturday, May 15 and Sunday, May 16. The majority of the activities are scheduled from noon to 4 p.m. Thomas Harris, aged 13 from Fairfax County, Virginia, is a fictional character created for this activity. Here is the first of his letters...

*May 14, 1776*

*Dear friends:*

*The stories I hear of the militia are very exciting these days! My older brother Robert and Father try not to include me in such talk but that hasn't stopped me from over hearing one way or another. Colonel Mason has sent word that all militia men should prepare themselves. While I know that I am not yet 16, I am still very able bodied! I hear tales of the King's navy creating a blockade in the city of Boston's harbor. Col. Mason supports the colonists to the north and we must ready ourselves to fight here too!*

*Our family and others like us have been supporting the northern colonies and the people of Boston and their decision to rebel by throwing all of that tea into their harbor. So far, we've been abstaining from using any goods that come from England and have been working hard to get by on only what's available here in Virginia. Father says that more and more British troops are occupying*

*Boston and Col. Mason and General Washington wish for us to be ready ourselves! My father is already gathering all his decent fire-locks as well as plenty of gunpowder, lead and gun flints.*

*I hear that after Virginians decided to put their support behind the colonists in the north, Governor Dunmore had all the gunpowder removed and taken away! I think this means it's only a matter of time before there is fighting here on our own land.*

*Mother is doing her part as well by getting uniforms ready for Father and Robert. She says it's so they have them should they need them but I think we all know they will soon rather than later. The militia men are to dress themselves in brown and in our county alone hundreds of men are ready to fight should they be needed.*

*I cannot stand the thought of all this excitement taking place while I miss out and am determined to find a way to join their cause!*

*Even though I am not old enough, will you help me find a way to enlist in the militia? Come and join me at Col. Mason's estate as we see the militia prepare!*

*Tom Harris*