



The Lexington Minute Men, Inc.

(Member, the Centennial Legion of Historic Military Commands, Inc.)

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Lexington, MA (March 17, 2008) --- "Stand your ground. Don't fire unless fired upon, but if they mean to have a war, let it begin here," is what is etched in stone on the Battle Green and what was allegedly said by Captain John Parker to the Lexington militia company on the morning of April 19, 1775. "I find those words stirring every time I hear them," says Carlo Bertazzoni, Captain Commanding of the Lexington Minute Men.

Captain Parker was born on his father's farm on the present Spring Street in the western part of Lexington, Massachusetts on July 13, 1729. "His parents I am sure had no idea their son John would one day play such a prominent role in the first battle of the American War for Independence," reflects Alex Cain, author of *We Stood our Ground, Lexington in the First Year of the American Revolution*, Heritage Books, Westminster, MD, 2004, and a member of the Lexington Minute Men. "Not much is known about Parker's early life" adds Cain,

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"But we do know he served as a soldier during the French and Indian War and participated in the Siege of Louisburg and the Attack on Quebec City."

"Parker was also active in his community, making his living as a farmer and craftsman (he was a talented woodworker) while also serving Lexington in various offices," reports historian Bill Poole, a member of the Lexington Minute Men. "He was a natural selection for Captain because of his experience in the prior war. At the Battle of Lexington, he was one of the most experienced veterans on either the Kings' or Colonists' side."

"Parker had to have cold water running through his veins to stand up to 700 to 800 of His Majesty's Regulars (Redcoats) with just 77 militiamen," says Lexington Minute Man Jim Roberts, admiringly. "The amazing thing about Parker is that following the deadly skirmish on Lexington Common, that left eight men killed and nine wounded, he was able to rally his men and lead them in pursuit of the Regulars. Parker's men later ambushed the Redcoats in one of a series of bloody encounters along the road from Concord to Charlestown; a day long battle that involved more than 3,500 provincial militia and over 1,700 of King George's finest troops. Parker gave as good if not better than he got on that fateful day."

"I feel honored to portray Captain John Parker and to celebrate our common heritage with my fellow residents of Lexington as well as with visitors from away" says Bertazzoni, a pharmacist of Italian - American descent. "I hope I do him

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justice. It's always very moving to recreate the mounting tension as the local militia company from Lexington confronts the King's Regulars, and then engage in the skirmish — 'the Shot heard 'round the world'."

But did Parker actually say those immortal words? According to Captain Bertazzoni, those are not Parker's exact words. "The Lexington Minute Men have researched the event based on testimony of those who assembled there in 1775," explains Bertazzoni. "Based on our research, the actual words spoken by Captain Parker are 'Stand your ground. Do not fire unless fired upon. Let the troops pass by and do not molest them...without they begin first!' In the past 232 years, the words have been altered to the more popular saying but each year on the Green we recreate the original words of Captain Parker."

As the Lexington Minute Men prepare for the annual Battle of Lexington re-enactment on Patriot's Day— April 21st 2008, they are reminded of Captain Parker and the 77 men that stood with him. "The annual re-enactment is a great opportunity to witness our common heritage and see the efforts of individuals like Captain Parker" says Bertazzoni. "Spectators begin to arrive at Lexington Green at 3:30 in the morning in order to get a prime spot for the events that begin with the alarm bell sounding in the Old Belfry at 5:30 am."

The reenactment of the 'Battle of Lexington' is just one event in which the Lexington Minute Men will participate on Patriot's Day – April 21, 2008. The Battle at Lexington starts at 5:45 am. The Minute Men also participate in the

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Lexington Sunrise Youth Parade at 7:30 am, additional ceremonies near the Green at 8:15 am and 10:15 am and the Lexington Patriots' Day Parade at 2 pm.

The Lexington Minute Men is a civic organization dedicated to honoring the brave Patriots who have made the ultimate sacrifice in defense of our Nation's freedom. The Minute Men have a long proud history, from the militia that fought on the Green in 1775, to providing men to fight throughout the American Revolution. The Minute Men gained attention again during the Centennial Celebration of 1876, when President U.S. Grant saluted the 77 men who stood on the Green. In the past 125 years, the Minute Men have been involved in a number of ceremonial, educational, and civic functions. During the Bicentennial, the Minute Men served as honor guards for President Ford and Queen Elizabeth. The Lexington Minute Men are under the command of Captain Carlo Bertazzoni. For more information on the Lexington Minute Men visit <http://www.lexingtonminutemen.com/>.

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Press Notes: Media access to the reenactment of the Battle of Lexington is coordinated by Lexington Minute Men. Advanced Credentialing deadline is April 12. Details can be found at <http://users.rcn.com/waynemccarthy/LMM2002/mediainfo.htm> Inquiries should be made to 518-698-3210 before April 12, 2006. Inquiries after April 12, 2006 should be made to 978-407-5718. . Because the re-enactors do not have sound amplification, any flyovers or news helicopters disrupt the event. WE REQUEST NO FLYOVERS OR NEWS HELICOPTERS.

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