

S U N D A Y , A P R

## Knoxville Tennessee Activist Leader Rand Cardwell's Thoughts on the April 19 Gathering on Lexington Green

To say the least, it was an inspirational event with top-notched speakers and plenty of like-minded patriots. It is really difficult to put into words the surge of emotions and pride that are still reverberating inside of us.

I was one of the organizers of the Knoxville Tea Party on April 15th. The Oath Keepers ceremony that was conducted at the close of that event was awesome. Over 2,000 of "we the people" stood side by side, raised our right hands and reaffirmed oaths or took it for the first time. The unity of spirit, the love for the this nation, and respect for all those that have paid for our freedoms that we enjoy today, will be a memory that I will cherish the rest of my life.

The event at Lexington Green was more powerful. Maybe it was the historical significance of the location. Being a lifelong history buff, I understood the importance of the site. I understood the implications of the Oath Keeper ceremony being conducted on the site and on the anniversary of the "shot heard around the world." I understand that now, more than anytime in my life, that our nation needs this modern version of the same resolve of the eight men that lay buried on the Green. The resolve to stand against tyranny; against massive odds; to stand together with our fellow man in defiance. There are only five people in our nation that attended both of these events. My wife and I are both honored to be part of that small group.

The speakers were motivating and informative. Several topics were touched upon, but all had a recurring theme, which was one of less government and a return to the foundation principles of our Constitution. Mr. Walter Ready, Head of the Committees of Safety, outlined why we were there, on the hallowed ground of Lexington Green, and the direction that his organization is leading in the effort to put "teeth" into the current wave of State

Sovereignty legislation that is sweeping the nation.

Garrett Lear, the Patriot Preacher, gave an excellent speech about the Christian beliefs that were held by the men that stood on the Green in 1775. Dressed in traditional clothing of the era, Pastor Lear also spoke of the role of the Church and the "Black Robe Brigade" during the Revolution. He also led us in prayer, which was very touching and invoked a solemnness for the event.

The famed Constitutional lawyer Edwin Vieira could not make the event, but Mr. Tom Moor read his speech with passion and Mr. Vieira's words still moved many in the audience, even in his absence.

Lt. Cmdr. Guy Cunningham beamed with pure energy as his voice rang from the podium. I couldn't help but to compare him to a Southern Baptist preacher in the style and enthusiasm the expression his beliefs. Sheriff Richard Mack gave a passionate speech about the role of a Constitutional Sheriff, which was well received by the audience.

Stewart Rhodes gave another excellent speech that echoed in the same eloquence that he did in Knoxville; "Not On Our Watch", which was often repeated in great numbers from the crowd. Stewart had to stop the flow of his speech several times as people in the crowd would shout out support.

Famed Navy SEAL Capt. Larry Bailey was the man that administered the oath ceremony. This proven warrior, whose exploits fill the pages of several accounts of the Viet Nam War, gave further resolve to the active-duty military, veterans, Law Enforcement Officers, civil servants, and patriots as we raised our right hand and reaffirmed our oaths. At the end of the ceremony there were very few that didn't have tears in their eyes.

As people started mingling afterward, I took a private moment and went as stood on the actual location of the line that the militia stood on that faithful day in 1775. Volunteers had come earlier in the day and driven a series of wooden stakes in the ground to mark that location. With all the people around, at that point talking

and socializing, I allowed myself a moment to remember those men. Of the eight that now lay under a monument on the NW corner of the Green. Of the one man, fatally wounded, that crawled off the Green into the arms of his wife to die on his doorstep. Of the 80-year old man that answered the call that morning, that gave the field to the overwhelming strength of the British, but continued to fight throughout the day. Taking a total of five shots and killing three redcoats before being shot in the face and bayoneted several times. When found by his family, who first thought him to be dead, saw that as he lay on the ground he was reloading his musket. He lived to be 98. I thought of Capt. John Parker and the words that he spoke to that small group as the British army advanced. "Stand your ground. Don't fire unless fired upon. But if they mean to have a war, let it begin here."

Capt. Parker, we hear your words through the years. Just as the men of Lexington stood that day, we now are duty bound to do the same. May our resolve be as strong as theirs. May our nerve not falter. May we shoot straight if the need comes. Yes Sir, Capt Parker, WE WILL STAND OUR GROUND. You can count on us.

NOT ON OUR WATCH

In Freedom,  
Rand Cardwell  
Oath Keeper since 1986



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