

## Thank You, Capt. John Parker

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by W.H. Lamb

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1900 Statue of The Minuteman, Historic Battle Green, Lexington, Massachusetts. A stylized depiction of Capt. John Parker of the Lexington Militia.

It was good to see you, Sir—to once again stand in front of your Minuteman Statue on the front

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edges of the historic Battle Green in Lexington, Massachusetts. It's one of my very favorite places in the entire world. When I first saw you way back in 1955, I was just beginning to appreciate what you and your friends accomplished there on that early misty morning of April 19, 1775, and later at the North Bridge a few miles away in Concord, two places that have become virtual "Beacons of Liberty" over the decades to people who are dedicated to the proposition that human freedom must never "perish from the earth".

My future mother-in-law, who took me to Lexington and Concord that first time, was a real patriot. You would have liked her grit and patriotism. I promised you then that I would return with my family to tell them about you and about the sacrifices you and your friends made to give us a free country. So I did, and when I next saw you in 1988 with my wife and family, I promised that I would bring my grandchildren back to see you someday. A few years ago I kept that promise also.

Some folks in my neck of the woods thought it was a waste of time and money to drive all that way to tell my grandkids about you. I think that they believed I should concentrate on the Revolutionary War battles fought in the South, especially in South Carolina. Truth is, Sir, the folks in the South pretty much finished up what you folks in Massachusetts started. I've taken my family and grandkids to most of the Revolutionary War battlefields in the South, difficult battles that you missed. But I guess some down here keep forgetting that you folks in Lexington and Concord loved liberty also, and that if it wasn't for your courage and determination, we might all still be singing, "God Save the Queen"! Perish the thought!

I told my daughter and grandkids about how you were born right

there in Lexington in 1729, and about how you became a soldier and served with other "British" Americans during the French and Indian War. I told them of your valor at the Siege of Louisbourg and during the conquest of Quebec during that war, and how all of your service and experience probably led to your election as Captain of Militia by your fellow militiamen there in Lexington, before the British decided to try to disarm you and your friends.

Sir, a lot has changed in our country since you mustered on your village green with your comrades to confront aggression. As we stood by your grave there in Lexington, I said that I was really sad that you died of tuberculosis in September, 1775, only 46 years old, and that you didn't live to see the glorious outcome of what you and your men started five months earlier. I'd like to think, Sir, that you'd be pleased and perhaps disappointed at the same time, when considering what our country has become since you lived. As we traveled through Boston, Salem, Plymouth, Richmond, and Philadelphia—places you knew something about—I was encouraged to see crowds of people looking at the historic sites and buildings, as they tried to understand what it was that motivated you and those other patriots of your time. But it was discouraging to hear so many non-English languages spoken around us. Perhaps they were foreign visitors who were trying to absorb those things that made America great, so they could return to their own countries and improve their own societies. Perhaps they were part of the 30 to 50 million who have come among us **illegally**, and were just visiting the shrines of a dying civilization. You didn't have this problem in your day, Sir,

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Sir, I'll have to tell you that my grandchildren, and perhaps the other adults standing in front of your statue with me, didn't understand why their grandfather—their father—their friend who was telling them about your history and dedication—began to cry as we stood in front of your Minuteman Statue late on our last night in Lexington. I told you that it would probably be my final "muster" with you (although my oldest grandson is determined to take me back to your special village green again). I mentioned that I had brought a new generation of potential patriot recruits to carry on what you and your fellow patriots started. As we all stood there in the gathering darkness in front of your statue, with that historic example of what dedicated and fearless people could achieve all around us, I made them promise that they would, in turn, learn the most important lesson of history---the lesson that FREEDOM ISN'T FREE! I made them promise that they, in turn, would stand in front of your statue someday with their children and grandchildren, and would tell them about you, and of the founding of our country, and of the sacrifices that were made to transmit this heritage of freedom and liberty down the ages to us, and about me and what I tried to teach them about what it meant to live in a free country. Perhaps, in their future wisdom and maturity, they will then understand why their father and grandfather was crying as we stood in front of your statue, which has inspired Americans ever since its sculptor, Henry Kitson, erected it in 1900. **Hopefully your statue will still be standing when they are old and grey like me, and will not have been sacrificed to the gathering insanity of political correctness and identity politics that is destroying the very country that you helped to birth.**

Before I go, Sir, I'd like to tell you about a man named Jefferson Davis. He lived in a big house in Richmond, Virginia that we visited. Later, as we stood in front of his grave in that beautiful Hollywood Cemetery in Richmond, I thought about how similar you and he had been. He was a man of principle that I think you would have liked. He and his friends formed a new country just like you and your fellow countrymen ultimately did. Lots of other Americans disagreed with him and said his reasons for starting that new country weren't honorable or legitimate, and those two countries went to war and a lot of blood was shed and many died, just like in your day. His enemy turned out to not be a nation across the sea, but another nation right next door to his own new country. I guess, Sir, that Davis and his countrymen did what they believed was right, just like you and your friends did, for reasons that they considered equally valid.

You never knew it, Sir, but a lot of YOUR fellow citizens were horrified at what you and your friends started, there on that green in Lexington on that April morning in 1775, just as a lot of Americans were equally horrified at the tragic and totally unnecessary events that unfolded starting in 1861. Valor, Sir, has not always clothed its wielders with success, but they were awarded with honor, at least in the minds and hearts of most of their countrymen. You'd be pleased, Capt. Parker, to know that you have not been forgotten, at least not by many of us who now call ourselves simply Americans, no matter where we live. My wife and I have done our best to train up new patriot recruits. I'm sure that many other grandfathers and grandmothers have done the same over the generations, and are still doing that today. I'd like to think, Sir, that despite our shortcomings and our many faults, you'd be pleased at the results of what you and your friends began, 244 years

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Published with hope and prayer that our descendants and our countrymen of the future will remember what YOU did, and will say the same about us!  
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