

BEDFORD POLE CAPPING, 2017

REMARKS DELIVERED BY SHARON MCDONALD BEDFORD'S TOWN HISTORIAN

Did you know this gathering was happening? I didn't know a thing about it until I saw you folks coming up the road. I dropped what I was doing and joined you. Well, it's time to make our sentiments known. If there's to be a Pole Capping, I want to be part of it.

This year of 1775 has been horrible since the King closed the Port of Boston last summer. Now no ships arrive but those full of the King's soldiers. Boston is overflowing with those lobster backs.

Our boycott on imported goods is hard – I really want some good cloth for a new gown. My porcelain teapot is cracked and I can't replace it... but who is drinking tea now, anyway? I do long for a big cup of hot chocolate... And my husband is grumpy without his snuff. But we won't back down!

My youngest granddaughter asked me why it was happening, and I told her Parliament has taken against us because of the tea we dumped into the harbor a year ago last December –and they say they won't open the port again until we pay for the tea. But it's not the tea, it's the taxes Parliament laid on us! They think they can control us!

I tell you, it's a grievous situation. Last fall, the men at Town Meeting voted 12 pounds to increase our powder and ammunition stores, and they voted to send John Reed and Doctor Ballard to the Provincial Congress. Then, not three weeks ago, Town Meeting set up a Minuteman company in addition to the militia – well, I'm just glad my husband is too old to go. But my son has signed up! He spends four hours a week training on the Common, waving that old red militia flag – “Vince AutMorire” - and training to be ready for --- I dare not think what.

Now they're trying to take Town Meeting away from us. We're Englishmen with rights, and we won't be treated this way! So on with the Pole Capping! The liberty cap has been a symbol of freedom since ancient times. Climb up and put it atop the pole for the world to see. So what if General Gage's spies hear about it? It's a climb for FREEDOM! FREEDOM! FREEDOM!