LEXINGTON ORAL HISTORY PROJECTS, INC.

Interview
Tom Curran
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Interview conducted by Lenore Fenn
Videotape length 81 minutes

TC: My name is Tom Curran. I was a senior information specialist, worked for a newspaper in Ethiopia, did army security for two years. Was a copy boy for the [Boston] *Record American*, looking for a job in journalism, came to see Mr. Adams at the *Lexington Minuteman*, and was hired.

INT: When did you start working for the *Lexington Minuteman*?

TC: May, 1967. My first job was in the Supplement Section, working on topics that impacted all towns, such as youth centers, shared topics.

INT: Where did you live?

TC: In Lynn, Waltham, never in Lexington.

INT: What was your sense of the town?

TC: Lexington was a great town. It was different from the North Shore where I grew up—flavor of the sea, not landlocked—Lynn was very established. In Lexington, Bedford, and Lincoln the Selectpersons were tied to the industries in the area. When I worked here [in Lexington] I reported on what was going on, but didn't get involved in what was going on. I photographed a lot. Worked for the Supplement Section for two years. When I worked for the Lexington paper I covered the Planning Board, the Fire Department, sports in town.

INT: Your sense of town governance?

TC: I loved it. I grew up in a city, with a City Council, elections, political fights. Anne Scigliano [*Minuteman* editor] covered Town Meeting. I went to take photographs, and stayed the entire time. I was impressed with the Town Meeting form of government. Other towns had a hard time getting

a quorum. I live in Topsfield now, and go to every Town Meeting. I think it's the best form of government there is, a great form of government.

INT: Did you mean Lynn was landlocked politically?

TC: It was a seacoast, farming community. There was a visual difference. Lynn and Nahant—on a peninsula. Water was a major part of my life; I could see the ocean from the front porch. It was something--there was no water around here, except for the "Res" and Walden Pond.

INT: Tell us about the major issues in town in '71. *Minuteman* stories refer to "Ethics in Town Meeting," "Drug Busts at the High School," "Vandalism."

TC: There always was a sense of vandalism in town, a concern that it shouldn't exist, that it should stop. I remember one photo I took, with the Lexington paper. I did a "Pictorial Editorial" every week. The one of which I was most proud showed a stop sign near Hayden. With spray paint someone had written "War" underneath. The caption I wrote was, "Dissent can be constructive in a democracy, but sometimes destructive in a community." And it really tied in. There's a way of protesting and not protesting.

It also seems kids at the High School used to get on the roof of the Field House, and spray paint names, years, etc., and that was a major concern of people. It was a challenge to the high school students. Again, vandalism was a concern. In the "Police Blotter" [section of the *Minuteman*] you'd see occasional acts of vandalism. Conflict of interest in Town Meeting I can't remember. I do remember that Lexington was a very issue-oriented community. It had to do with a very diverse population. It had people with all kind of occupations, all kinds of educational levels, of various nationalities—it was truly a melting pot. Just so many different parts to the community, and I think it was healthy.

INT: Was Lexington changing while you worked here?

TC: I left the *Minuteman* in '73. Seven years. I worked for the Lexington paper only three years. I left full time to finish my degree at Boston University, nights. Then I worked part time in the photo lab.

INT: What were the divisive issues in town?

TC: On the Planning Board, cluster zoning. There was strong feeling that lots should be a certain large size, and I remember Alex [Zaleski] who was the Planning Director. He talked about cluster zoning, where instead of looking at house per lot, you would look at an entire development. You could have houses on smaller lots, but there'd be like a common land, which would make better use of open space. That was one.

Sports at the High School—always good teams. I covered the basketball team, which won back-to-back state championships. I covered the Fire Department. It was a good department; they were very open, very concerned about the community, too. An excellent Police Department. The impression I got—and again, I didn't cover the Police Department—was that they were very concerned about the community, the people who lived in it, and they were very visible. I got the impression they were very helpful, too.

INT: Cluster zoning was divisive?

TC: Some felt there should be large lots, and I just remember it seemed like a controversy. Someone presented the idea, and there'd be opposition. I also remember another one, too: low and moderate income housing. The big argument at that time was that a lot of people were not in favor; they felt there shouldn't be apartment houses in Lexington; it should be single-family houses. One of the strongest arguments I saw for it was that there were a lot of people who had come to town as a young couple, had raised their families—they were getting along in years. They didn't have the money to really pay the taxes, and they were being forced to leave the community

because they couldn't afford to live here, and I thought that was a very strong argument for people who'd invested so much of the lives and families in the community—giving them an opportunity to live in the community with the means they had available. I remember that very strongly.

INT: You were persuaded. Were others?

TC: I think it all depended on whose neighborhood the interest was in building something like that, so...

INT: Did the *Minuteman* have an editorial position on the war in Vietnam in 1991 or at any time?

TC: No, it didn't. One thing Alan Adams, the publisher, felt really strongly about was the paper was to cover issues, not to get out there and be a soapbox unto itself. I think he looked at it as equal access to all members of the community, no matter what the viewpoint was, even if it took a swipe at him or anybody at the paper. Or even if the paper did an editorial on a town issue, in his "Brickbats and Bouquets" [letters to the editor] he really would allow anything in there as long as it was in good taste.

INT: How did you first hear of Operation POW?[1]

TC: I first really found out... I remember Anne [Scigliano] had talked about it. The issue came up at the Selectmen's meeting. That was it, until coming towards the end of the week. The staff of the newspaper—it was Memorial Day Weekend—and everybody was going here, or to Maine, or to New Hampshire. I had an apartment in Waltham at the time, and I was going to go up to my folks' place in Lynn. I had talked to them in the beginning of the week, and said I would be there Friday night.

On weekends one of my favorite things was, if possible, to go out and take pictures of things, take photographs. That was something I really

[1] Operation POW was the name given to the Memorial Day weekend action—marching along the route of Paul Revere in reverse, from Concord to Boston— by the VVAW, to signify that "we are all prisoners of war" as a result of our involvement in the Vietnam War.

enjoyed, in addition to writing. I had the equipment, the interest, and I had the desire for news photography, and I was talking with Bob Benoit, who was the executive editor for the *Minuteman*, and he had mentioned that there was going to be a meeting of the Vietnam Veterans Against the War out in Concord that Friday night. So I said, "I'll go to my folks' house Saturday AM and see what happens, go back to my apartment in Waltham and sleep that night, and as I'm coming through Lexington to go up to the North Shore. I'll get a picture of them coming through Lexington." So I called my folks and told them I'd be there maybe around noontime. I went over to Concord to talk to some people, and they said they'd be coming through town midmorning or something, and I found out the route they'd be coming so I could take a few pictures on the way. I arrived, took photos, and was talking with someone and they said they would be spending the night on the Battle Green, and I figured that was something I really should stay for. So I called my folks, and kept calling, saying, "I will be over later." I finally got over on Monday. It seemed to evolve. I had no time commitments. I kept rolling with the events to see how they developed that weekend.

INT: Had you covered other protests?

TC: Yes, one at the Hanscom Air Force Base Entrance on Route 2A. I was out there and taking photographs of that. I remember one demonstrator... there was a group coming down the hill next to the Hayden Center. I was taking photographs. The guy asked, "Who are you taking pictures for?" I said, "The *Lexington Minuteman*." He said, "You guys came down to our farm in Connecticut." I said, "No, not that paramilitary organization that would beat up on people who were demonstrating. The *Minuteman* is the newspaper in town!" So he said, "Okay."

INT: Was it peaceful?

TC: Every demonstration in this area I ever saw was peaceful, from the point of view of the people demonstrating, and the police officers. It was amazing. Police were firm but gentle. If the demonstrators would go limp, they wouldn't fight. If I'd go home and look at TV the only demonstrations I ever saw on TV were violent. Ones around here…I never saw violent demonstrations around here. Now I think of it, I'm willing to bet there were a lot of similar protests throughout the country, and the only ones we really saw were violent ones, and I think that's too bad. Because, as I said before, I think protest in a democracy can be constructive because it brings out different ideas.

INT: Describe Concord, and then how the veterans were received in Lexington—their deportment, their behavior.

TC: As I remember it seemed as though, in Concord, it was... I won't say it was a party atmosphere, but it was a social party. A number of politicians were there. I think [State Senator] Chet Atkins was there, and [Congressman] Father Drinan. It was not a group of Veterans Against the War getting together, or a group of protesters by themselves getting together and saying, "We're going to have a demonstration-protest." Other people came who weren't associated. It was almost like a celebrity draw to them over in Concord. A young girl came up dressed as Paul Revere, rode up to the stage, delivered a paper—the "Bill of Rights" smilingly handed over. There was a stage, a microphone, speakers, refreshments furnished by a church or something. Somewhat festive.

There was talk of spending the night on the Lexington Battle Green. It was going later into the night. I didn't stay for the whole discussion because it was getting dark and hard to take photographs, so... But I did ask when they would break camp. They planned to be coming down to the Center, around 10-11 Saturday AM. So I went back to Waltham for a night's sleep.

The next morning I came down and took some photographs of them marching down the street and it was just veterans dressed in battle fatigues. There were no residents at that time of the walk from Concord to Lexington Center. At that time I found out they were planning to stay on the Green. I had known from events before that week that it was not going to be allowed. I didn't know if things had changed or what. I also remember there was going to be a meeting that afternoon. I think Allan Kenney, a Selectman, a key person, set up a meeting between the veterans and town officials toward some kind of agreement.

As I remember, they did stop at the Battle Green, and stayed all day. Residents came out and talked with them, and it was very open and very friendly—a bunch of people getting together. As I remember it was beautiful weather, too.

INT: What kind of people came?

TC: They were Lexington residents: little kids, adults. It was nondescript. Not like, "Oh, you'd expect that person, and that person, and never expect that person!" It was just like residents of the town. There were a lot of residents who didn't become involved in things. They had their private lives, their own things that kept them busy, you know, they weren't involved a lot with what was going on in the community. It seemed like a very large cross section that went down there. Some people stopped. Then there were other people who came down and argued strongly with what the veterans were doing. They wanted to be a part of it, make their own statements. There was a cross-section.

INT: Were the veterans an organized group, or individuals clustered?

TC: I got the impression that the veterans were a very well organized group. In fact, as I remember, they had a spokesman, an organizer who talked with officials of the town, and I believe this person was a paid staff

person of the veterans. I don't know if he was a vet or not, but that indicated to me that it was a definite organization. Even looking back on it, that they could bring together the kind of atmosphere in Concord—it wasn't a group of people, of individuals on their own, getting together. It was an organized group, a very established group.

INT: Were the veterans clustered around, joking, or standing individually. Were they sad?

TC: I think there were all kinds of emotions. The way they walked through town was the way you'd walk through the jungle. It was single file, absolutely stretched out. It was almost as if they were on patrol in the jungle. They weren't walking in twos or threes, or fours. It was just like a straight line, all spread out, when they were marching.

When they got together they'd talk about where they had served, and—no pun intended—war stories. They knew each other. I remember them walking into town—it was just like they were on patrol.

INT: Did you go to the meeting?

TC: Yes, I did. I remember it extremely well.

INT: What was the tone?

TC: I will say one thing: after that meeting I had such tremendous respect for the Lexington Board of Selectmen! I felt the house was packed with VVAW supporters. The Selectmen, when they got up there… there was quite a lot of booing, a lot of hissing, they were called down, but they maintained their composure, their dignity. It would have been very easy to say, "Okay, this once we'll do it." But, for the reasons they had chosen, had made the decision, they were going to stand by it for the good of the town. I think that says a lot for the community of Lexington and the type of people elected into positions of the town. It can be a thankless job, but they took it

extremely seriously. I just had, you know, a tremendous amount of respect for them.

INT: What were they concerned about?

TC: I think the one thing that complicated the whole thing was the Vietnam War. If you take the Vietnam War out of it, there was a decision: "Would a group be allowed to stay on the Battle Green?" and I think that was the only issue the Selectmen were facing. Their judgment was, "No group has ever been allowed to stay on the Battle Green, and this group can be XYZ, or it can the Brownies, or it can be the Girl Scouts. Organizations aren't allowed to stay on the Battle Green. That's the decision." What complicated it was that people were saying, "But this is about the Vietnam War, this is a protest against the Vietnam War." Fine, it can be a protest, but the decision was: are we going to allow people, no matter who they are, to stay on the Battle Green?

My concern, in the back of my mind—and this edition was the only edition for which I ever wrote an editorial—but based on that meeting there were more issues that were going to be raised if they allowed them to stay, and the primary thing was: what's the criteria you use for allowing someone to stay there? Do you put a value on the cause of the organization? The VVAW may have been protesting war in Vietnam, but there were others who supported it. If they allowed them to stay there, they had to justify themselves for that action, and they would basically be saying, "Yes, we agree with the VVAW that the protest is right, that they should stay there." They hadn't allowed the Boy Scouts [or] the Girl Scouts to stay there. Back then there was no controversy. But it was a very touchy situation. That I saw as a major decision they had to make and they looked at it from the point of view "Do we allow any group to go on the Battle Green?"

At that time, as I got more into writing the story and talking with Anne and other people in town, the Selectmen had offered the VVAW other places to stay. But they wanted the Battle Green. Looking on it from their standpoint, and my background in communications, the VVAW had a fantastic news peg. If they got to stay on the Battle Green, they got media attention. If they had gone to the playground on Lincoln Street, they'd be just a bunch of guys walking through town. Maybe a picture in the *Minuteman*. Nothing in the *Boston Globe*. Nothing anyplace. I think they saw an opportunity to stay on the Battle Green and they capitalized on it. They were promoting their cause. That's looking at it from their standpoint. But the Selectmen had a decision to make: "Do we put a value on this organization?" But they offered an alternative, too.

INT: What were the citizens' concerns?

TC: A lot of the citizens at the meeting felt the protest of the VVAW was a very legitimate protest against a war a lot of them did not favor. A lot felt, "It's time to take a stand. This demonstration should take place." I think a lot of people in the auditorium at that time were against the war in Vietnam. I don't know the capacity of Cary Hall—three hundred? The population of Lexington was 35,000. So there was a very vocal concentrated group of people in the hall at that time, but I can't say if that represented the entire feelings of the population which was, you know, massive.

INT: Why was the issue so divisive?

TC: I think the war was divisive. There were demonstrations going on. It's the first war that really came into your living room. I mean, you could sit there having supper and see people jumping out of the back of a helicopter. You could see nurses working, comforting the wounded. It was... kids who were in the first grade saw things myself as a veteran,

having been in the army for three years, had never seen! You saw this in your home, which was considered a very safe place. There were a lot of people who were killed. There were friends, relatives, neighbors. I think everyone knew somebody who was killed or wounded over there. I think communication had a lot to do with that. It was the first time communication had been used to the extent it had been, and it bought it very close to home, and people were able to form opinions based on what they saw.

INT: Anything else?

TC: I just remember it was very vocal. It was strange. All the other meetings I had gone to in Cary were Town Meetings where Linc Cole [State Representative Lincoln Cole] would be out there and there would be absolute control over everything, and it was—it was bananas at times. I mean, it was just so different from anything I'd ever seen take place in that hall!

INT: Was the mood changing on the Green?

TC: That afternoon I was over there…but there were other things going on in town. I remember being up at the Selectmen's office. I didn't stay up at the Battle Green all afternoon. As it started to get dark there was a lot of communication among the vets. I was just following the milestones. I knew a meeting would be taking place that evening, around 7:00, the one in Cary Hall. I was taking pictures; I was trying to get a sense of what was going on, of what was happening. Words at that time were secondary. I spent a lot of time taking pictures of various people because I knew that somebody could say something right now, but it could change the next minute and it could change the next minute, and you could drive yourself crazy.

But I knew the big event was going to be the meeting that evening. So I went around taking photographs, just talking to people. It was a very casual

afternoon and suppertime. I can't remember how they got supper. Maybe people brought food in, I'm not sure, but later…then we went to the meeting. Then after the meeting there was going to be another meeting, later, up at Saint Brigid's. I did go up there. I remember at that time—I don't remember if he was there before—but John Kerry was there, too. That was the first time I really heard of John Kerry. Anyway, he was very much up in the front row with the Selectmen going into the meeting.

I can't remember what went on. It was an executive session of the Board of Selectmen, as I remember, up at Saint Brigid's. I can't remember what happened there, but afterwards Bob Cataldo and the Selectmen—all the Selectmen except Natalie Riffin—they all went down to the Battle Green. I think the curfew was going to be 10:00 PM. As I remember it was after that when the meeting broke up and they went down to the Battle Green, and Bob Cataldo told everyone that there had been an injunction issued, that they could not stay, they would be subject to arrest if they stayed there, and that was it. I think they may have been offered another place, the option of staying, too. But they decided they wanted the option of staying on the Green.

I think some people went home, got warm clothes and sleeping bags. Some went to the church across the street. They were going to sleep there to keep warm, to see what happened. It was after midnight when the police arrived. There were the Lexington police, a State Police contingent; there were police from other communities. People in the church across the street came out and got onto the Green. People were arrested. They had school buses there [and] they were bought to the DPW garage. But everything was peaceful.

INT: Any strong images stay in your mind?

TC: The one picture I remember, and it just summed it up for me: I took a picture of the Captain Parker Statue with State Police cars parked all the way around it. It was just one of those pictures. It meant a lot to me. I mean it was almost like the contrast. I would say that was a very special contrast from the whole event. I remember I was able to go through here [indicating the newspaper] and see some of the pictures, too. There were a couple of little kids, I mean tots, all wrapped up. So when I say it was a diversity of people who were there, it was. It wasn't like a contingent of followers of a special group who were there. It was a very widespread number of people gathered.

It was almost like immediately following the reenactment on Patriot's Day morning. It just seemed as if there were people everywhere leading up until that time. It was a very controlled, I mean self-controlled group, too. It wasn't off the wall. They weren't shouting. The only thing I really remember is walking through the group after Bob Cataldo made the announcement that the police would be coming if the people did not leave. I remember walking through and smelling marijuana, but that was it.

INT: How was the arrest handled?

TC: The police would come over. They would escort people. I didn't get out there. I stayed on the sidewalk. My thought was, "I'm not part of this, I don't want to complicate it." So I don't know what was said when the police went out there. But I just knew… They went out there, some may have been carried, but they were escorted. There was no fighting. I was impressed with the way the demonstrators conducted themselves. It was something like you never see on television! It was very different from anything you ever see. The people who stayed there had a very strong belief in why they were there, and they felt if it's breaking the law, it's something I have to do. And if it means I have to be arrested, then so be it, I'm not going

to fight it. If they did fight it, they might go limp or something like that, and they might have to be carried. But there was courtesy everywhere.

INT: No sense of fear, or anxiety?

TC: No. The police came, and had their job to do. And I think the demonstrators felt they had their job to do. And each party respected each other, and "Let's get this job done."

INT: Did you go on to the DPW?

TC: I drove down there later. I remember they had really filthy windows and you couldn't take pictures inside, so… But there was processing there, and they were brought by bus over to Concord, and I think...no, I didn't go over to Concord. I think I went back to the office and slept a little bit. I think they marched out of town that evening, or took bus transport out of town, because I remember I was there when a group of them left, when some of them left. They were going on to Charlestown. So, that was it.

INT: Why did this evolve as it did? Were there other choices?

TC: I think the VVAW wanted to make a statement. I think that for whatever reason this area was chosen. They said it was a reverse battle march going into Boston. I think they were looking at it as a way of publicity. You know, it was. If they had done it any other place… I live up in Topsfield now, and if they'd done it through Boxford, Topsfield, Milton, nobody would have come! Nobody would have seen them! Because it was Concord and the Lexington Battle Green it provided a setting. The message they developed was tied in with that, and I think the fact that they could not stay on the Battle Green provided them with an opportunity for media exposure—that is, the Vietnam vets. The people from the community who went out there believed in the statement the VVAW were making, and they saw this as an opportunity to make their own statement, and they did.

INT: What were the consequences, if any, for the town?

TC: I think there was a division in town. After that you either admired the Selectmen or you hated the Selectmen. But if you can get the Vietnam War out of the equation, everyone would admire the Selectmen. That's my own personal opinion. On a personal level, for a number of residents in town, it helped them formulate whatever position they wanted to take on the Vietnam War. From an outsider looking in I think it showed a very diverse community, a very orderly community and orderly citizenry, a very professional police force, a very professional town government—even though it's basically a volunteer, elected type of government system in the town. It showed there were a lot of people in the community with very definite ideas of what should be done, and they did it—whether it be someone on the Battle Green getting arrested or whether it was the Selectmen saying, "I believe I have this type of responsibility, this job to do, this responsibility to the community, and I'm going to do it." It was just very interesting, and the thing that was nice about it was that there was no violence. If you look at different parts of the world and what's going on, massacres and things like that, if people could come and see this—there was an 180 degree difference in opinion of hundreds of people, but they were able to talk it out, to be civil about it, and I think it speaks very well for the community.

INT: Did all this have any impact on ending the war, on national policy?

TC: I don't think so. Unless you look at similar incidents that had taken place throughout the nation and cumulatively they did. But I don't think just the demonstration that took place changed anything. It may have influenced other people. I mean, seeing what a demonstration could be like, then you might want to do the same thing. But I don't see it as having a major impact—but cumulatively, probably.

INT: You served in the military. Did your experience connect to these events?

TC: No, not really. I wasn't a Vietnam veteran. I was on the other side of the world. I basically lucked out when I went into the Army. I went into the Army to get everything I could out of it. It was a job to do, and when my time was up, "Thank you very much, I'm leaving." I'm a veteran, but I didn't see anything special about it. I could talk to some of these guys about "where did you go to basic?" and stuff like that, but that was about it.

INT: What was the impact on you? What did you learn?

TC: I think for me personally, professionally I got a lot out of it. It was a major story. I was the only one from the paper who was in town. It was kind of like management by erosion. But I was there with skills I had learned, been taught, had practiced. All of a sudden everything was coming together to produce. And I did a lot that week. The paper is laid out Wednesday morning, so everything had to be written, processed, check-verified, Tuesday. It was like working for a daily newspaper. Everyone on the staff—Anne Scigliano was unbelievable, answering questions. She opened doors. Alan Adams, the publisher, Bob Benoit, who was the executive editor, people in the photo lab—I mean this was a major event that was taking place in the town of Lexington, and Mr. Adams, he opened up the paper. This isn't the whole paper [holding up a copy of the *Minuteman*], but I'd love to know what the ratio of news to advertising space is. I think it would probably send just about any MBA into cardiac arrest. At the paper, if you look at this edition of the paper, it was a financial disaster. But if you look at what it did for the community! I mean, the letters! There was a flavor of opinion there. He said, "We will open up the paper and we will let the citizens of the community get their voice and opinion across."

Working with the staff of the *Minuteman*—I mean the Adamses—even though it was a business they had always tried to keep somewhat of a family atmosphere of the people who were there, and I think this showed teamwork—the people from various departments really coming together, and even under all of that pressure, not getting short tempered with each other. It was hell at the time, but it was—I mean for that week—it was a great experience.

INT: Why is there no official record except for two sentences in the Town Report?[2]

TC: You're talking about the Annual Report? I guess I don't know if a news event really belongs in there. Annual Reports I see as reports of town government, not major events taking place in the town. I can remember when we were working on the hundredth anniversary of the *Minuteman*, the newspaper, and to do different stories we'd go back through Annual Reports. As I remember with the Annual Reports I went through, there was not a lot of news of the town, but it focused more on actions taken by the town; there'd be reports from various departments. That's where we found out different things. If there were news events it would be pretty much in the newspaper. I can see where something like this might be covered as a statistic on how many people were arrested by the police in a year. But I'm not sure if the Annual Report is a record of the community other than the official actions taken by the town government. So that's the only thing I can say.

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[2] In the 1971 Annual Report, Town of Lexington the "Selectmen Report on The State of Lexington" says of this event: "Our proud heritage of April 19, 1775 is blurred by those who forget that the Battle-Green is not only a historic shrine but that it is also the cemetery of the honored dead of April 19, 1775. When the Battle Green was set aside as hallowed ground the town passed a by-law restricting its use, except as permitted by the selectmen, to a 'quiet and orderly behavior in keeping with a respectful regard and reverence for the memory of the patriotic service there so nobly rendered.' [Phrase from the actual bylaw, c.1923.] This was the reason for the action of the selectmen in denying to the Vietnam Veterans Against War the use of the Battle Green as a campsite for the night of May 29."

INT: At the newspaper, how did it handle coverage? Who helped?

TC: Everyone helped, and it was a matter of setting down and going through notes after notes after notes.

INT: Would you summarize the categories of information.

TC: Categories of information? So far as lists of people who were arrested, going back to events leading up to what took place that weekend, getting statements from the Selectmen afterwards, legal aspects—Anne Scigliano did a lot of things like that. My part of it was basically writing about what I saw, and the two major pieces were the special meeting in Cary Hall, the overall story of what happened, the photographs, and some photographs I had taken over in Concord for the Supplement Section. That was Tuesday's work.

INT: Were your sources of information cooperative?

TC: I would say people were very open. When I talked to members of the veterans who were there, I mean they talked. The police would talk. Everything was very open. For something this big there was really no hiding, and I think the people who were arrested there, they would almost look at it the same way. There wasn't skullduggery. People weren't carted off and kept under lock and key. It was... for one thing, looking at who they had... the people they protected every day, you know—it was weird.

TC: Was there editorial pressure?

INT: No. Only—and this was something Mr. Adams instilled in everyone—that in the news columns of the paper you don't put any of your opinions. If you have an opinion you want to express, then we'll talk about it for the editorial page. That was the only thing.

INT: Were you surprised by the numbers of letters to the editor?

TC: I was surprised at the final total number, but I knew there were going to be a lot of letters. Lexington had always been a letter writing

community. I mean, there are some people who will not say a word to you, but they'll write a three-page letter that is just eloquent. That's one thing about Lexington: if an issue comes up, people will write about it, and Mr. Adams, he would always make room for letters, and it was probably the best read part of the paper because people wanted to find out what others in the community were thinking.

INT: Were you surprised at the content?

TC: Not really. Having been there I knew there were strong beliefs all the way around, and it was just how people were going to put their strong beliefs into words. But the final number of letters? Yes, I was surprised, but I knew we were going to get a lot.

INT: What was the feedback on the coverage?

TC: People were glad the paper was as large as it was, that they could see things. People were extra glad because a lot of people had left town that weekend. For a lot of people with camps it was the weekend they opened up their camps. Lexington was quiet that weekend. It wasn't like a normal weekend. And people were, like, up in Maine. It did make national news because people were looking at the TV, and they were hearing about this major demonstration taking place in Lexington, Massachusetts. "Lexington—*Kentucky*?" And they had no idea what was going on. By the time they came back, it was just nice and quiet.

INT: Were you contacted by other news agencies?

TC: I think it was Bruce McCabe from the *Boston Globe*. I'm positive it was Bruce McCabe because I let him into the *Minuteman* office because he wanted to file a story, and he used the typewriter there, too. I didn't get involved with anyone else. I just happened to know him. Others were, you know, going about the way they would cover something. Maybe there was a difference in writing, too. One thing about this, if you're going to cover it,

you come in, you cover it, and you leave. As a member of the *Minuteman* staff I was covering it, I was going to get all the details, but it wasn't something I was going to kiss off. I was going to continue to cover the community. And that's what I did. I stayed around, I was out there, I observed. I didn't want to get out there and be part of the story. I didn't feel that was my place.

INT: Looking back, it there anything you would do differently?

TC: I don't think so. I felt very comfortable with the way everything went as far as gathering the information—I mean access to people. If it hadn't been that way, I think there would have been a lot I would have liked to have changed

INT: Anything else? Mr. Adams' attitude?

TC: I think he was a great asset to this community. He provided the citizens of this community with a forum with which to express their views, even if it took a swipe at him, or his business. Something could get into the paper that caused personal hurt—about his business or a friend of his, or somebody he knew—if it was part of the public record he felt it should be in there. But he was a great individual to work for. He and Mrs. Adams were in that office and they were just a great couple. They considered people who worked at the paper as family. You had to perform, but it was kind of like family. I can remember every once in awhile Mrs. Adams would put together a pot luck luncheon and people would bring in their baking specialty or would bring in ice cream and we'd just have a massive luncheon for people. It's something that I felt very fortunate to experience, and a type of journalism the country needs. Because I always felt that no matter how sophisticated the audience of Lexington was, and you might get your *Wall Street Journal* or your *New York Times* or your *Boston Globe*, but you

always got your *Minuteman* because none of those papers covered the town the way Mr. Adams wanted it covered.

There is one other thing. I also remember when Anne was laying out the front page. This is the front page of the paper [holding the paper]. I think it shows visually the community. It shows the demonstration here, the meeting in Cary here, and down here the Memorial Day Parade. Look at all three: that's a community newspaper.

INT: What was it Mr. Adams would have said to the advertisers?

TC: If an MBA had been in charge of that they would be in cardiac arrest when they looked at the proportion of news space to advertising space. That paper cost him money. I would say there is very little advertising in these pages. You've got two full pages of photography here. You've got a page of letters with not a bit of advertising, the front page—no advertising. He wanted the story told of what happened that weekend. A community has a very great asset if they get somebody who's willing to basically give that to the community.

INT2: I was wondering if you tried to tabulate the political content of the letters as they came in, the pros and cons.

TC: No, I don't know if somebody did or not. Basically—and I haven't looked at the letters here—the only thing we tried to do was mix them so you didn't have all pro here followed by all con, or vice versa; we really interspersed them, not like the Congressional delegates following their letters coming in.

INT2: The pro were a majority. How do you feel that Cataldo was turned out in the next election?

TC: The people speak. As I remember Bob had been in office for a long time. There may have been other issues that played a factor in it. Granted, this may have, too. And it may have been in the heat of the moment. But I

think as people look back at it I think one of the things was... I wasn't a resident of Lexington; this was a place where I came to work. I have a very fond place in my heart for the community, but I think that the Selectmen were unanimous, with the exception of [Selectman] Natalie [Riffin] who was out of town. But I think all four Selectmen voted the position that the veterans would not be allowed to sleep on the Battle Green. So although Bob was turned out, there were others, too, who took that same position.

INT3: Did you continue to cover the Planning Board after that?

TC: Yes.

INT3: Clearly there was a division regarding this event. Did it carry along regarding other issues?

TC: Not that I observed. There may have been. I don't know.

INT2: What was done with the photographic archive?

TC: The last I saw of my archive it was at 9 Meriam Street, in the Adams Building. These are the *Minuteman*'s photographs. Photographs are basically kept by edition. Depending on what their file system is, you could probably go down there, and there were contact sheets of... I don't know how many rolls of film I took. That's one thing I always felt, that film was cheap, but to recreate the event would be really expensive.

END OF INTERVIEW