

## [The Birth of an American Tea Party](#) (Elbert Tea Party)

By: Robert P. Rowland

What does it take to stir Americans to give up their daily routines, take time from their families, friends and jobs and realize that the way of life we take for granted may be precariously close to being taken away from us? What does it take before we realize that we must find a way to preserve our nation, for ourselves, our children and our grandchildren? When is it that average Americans, who have no previous political influence, and no notoriety decide to rise up in the tradition of our forefathers from over 200 years ago, and start to form liberty groups to oppose their own government? Throughout our history events have happened where the threat has been so imminent and so clear that Americans knew it was an immediate call to action. Pearl Harbor is an example often used to highlight a direct and real threat to our nation, but when did the threat of losing our liberties, losing our founding documents and Constitutional protections, and being overrun by our own government become evident to us? When did we realize the unthinkable-that we have a government no longer Of the people, By the people and For the people, and that we have a President who does not believe in the America we have taken for granted for so long? When did the constitutional separation of powers government, the safeguard we assumed would protect us forever, evolve into one overpowering, liberty threatening bureaucratic mass, and why didn't we notice?

It didn't happen suddenly, we've all been too busy to notice that our liberties and our nation was changing, moving away from all the things we always believed would be there forever. It's hard to say exactly what got our attention. It started slowly, with little periodic changes under several administrations, but culminating with the swearing in of Barack Obama, who at first had many believing and others hoping that he had been honest in his campaign rhetoric about only wanting the best for America. In many ways his blatant turnaround from those campaign promises has been the cold water in our face that was needed to see through the subtle march our government was on to socialism and making our Constitution totally irreverent. Perhaps if President Obama and the current Congress hadn't forced National Healthcare on us, or he not been so obvious in his appointments of czars with pasts that most American's know are not in line with our values, or if he had not begun to toss aside alliances with allies and friends like Israel that most Americans know are critical to our nations safety. If he hadn't openly used terms like "redistribution of wealth" or spent more taxpayer money than any President in history, then maybe we would still be asleep. So in a sense, Barack Obama may be the spark that re-lit the flame of liberty in our hearts and minds.

I was one of those asleep in my comfortable world of middle class America. At 57 years old, I had been blessed with all the gifts a free and prosperous America offered. With two grown sons, two grandchildren, and a wife of 37 years, a nice home in a rural area of Colorado, five acres, a good paying job of 28 years, 3 cars, a tractor and two horses, life was good. I always voted when the weather was good, I sat around the TV watching Fox News and had plenty of commentary for my family and friends and happily assumed no matter what they did in Washington it wouldn't really affect me in my comfortable little rural nest. I was wrong, first I started to hear our new President say things that caught my attention, I started to pay attention to the Reverend Wright saga and thought, "well they voted this guy in, that's what they (us) get". Then he picked up the pace, and then HealthCare, surely he couldn't get that through, now he's messing with my doctor and I'm 57 years old, this is personal.

One day shortly after they used a loophole in a Congressional procedure and surprised us all by passing this monstrosity, I got mad. And as I was standing at the meat counter at the local market in our rural town talking to some neighbors and waiting for pauses between all of our ranting and raving to say my piece, it hit me, "it's time to do something, this is serious, this guy is not who he says he is, and though I haven't read the Constitution since Junior High School, this sounds like a "violation of it" I drove home thinking, "I've been complaining about this government for months, but it's doing no good, it's time to find a way to get involved." It was a Friday evening when I talked to my 35 year old son in the living room. I said to him, "we have to do something, we need to get involved," and since I'd heard about this 'TEA PARTY' movement, and knew a little history including something about throwing tea in the harbor

some time back, I said, "I'm going to join the Elbert County Tea Party" and so I proceeded to my computer to google it and sign up. I found our county didn't have one, so I started to look at other Tea Party web sites in the area and started to realize they were grassroots groups being started and organized by regular folks like me. I called to my son to come into the office and said, "there isn't a Tea Party in our county, what would it take to build a website and start one?" I had no idea what organizing a Tea Party meant, but it seemed like a good idea and it was serving to release some of that frustration and nagging fear I was having about how serious a threat this government was quickly becoming. With my son at the keyboard, I pulled up a chair and by Sunday morning we had build our website from a free template we found online. We set up an email address and for \$12.00 had secured the name and address with GoDaddy, another \$60.00 hosted our webpage with one of the online hosting services. I called my friend from the market encounter and said, "You and I are the founding members of the Elbert County Tea Party, tell your friends."

I then took the liberty of sending an invitation to all of my friends and neighbors in the County and asked them to spread the word. The responses came quickly, "sure, add me to the list, we've got to do something" (though none of us knew exactly what that was). I made up some flyers and hung them around town. By the next week we decided to have a meeting, picked a date, stopped by the old school in town and got their permission to use the gym on a Saturday morning in April. We went to work, meeting with folks I didn't previously know who were now emailing and offering assistance. We started to talk about structure, what our goals were, and one evening I sat down and put together our mission statement. Now we had purpose. It was starting to make sense and something inside us was stirring as people started to realize we had a responsibility to respond to what we believed was a government against the people, against us, a government with leaders who no longer listened or cared about what we thought or believed in.

About 75 folks showed up at the first meeting where we gave speeches, and asked each and every person in the bleachers what they thought and what they expected of a Tea Party. The response was terrific and our patriotic spirit had been re-ignited. We set a date and promised another meeting the following month. I started to call and email our politicians, not actually thinking they would return the call or email, let alone thinking that they would come to a meeting out in the boondocks. They responded quickly and agreed to come to our meeting in May. Our Congressman in Washington Mike Coffman was our first speaker, Greg Brophy our Senator in Colorado, along with our representative in the Colorado House Cindy Acree and Candidate for Governor Scott McInnis all showed up, spoke and took questions from our group, now over 250 strong. Attending at their own request the Candidate for U.S. Senate and former Lt. Governor Jane Norton appeared on stage, spoke and answered questions from the crowd, many now wearing apparel with our Tea Party logo.

As the momentum kept building, I was flooded with emails and requests to be added to the email list. We were getting calls from media and the candidate's campaign staff members asking to speak at our next meeting and asking for endorsements. This Tea Party thing had suddenly come to everyone's attention. Our 3rd meeting saw Tom Tancredo, former Colorado Congressman and Presidential Candidate, along with Scott King, Congressman from Iowa, and the other leading candidate for Colorado Governor Dan Maes. Many of the local elected officials, Commissioners, County Clerk, Treasurer, Assessor, Sheriff and candidates for office could be seen in the crowd of over 350.

We've now scheduled our 4th meeting in July, the last one to be held before the primary elections in Colorado on August 10, 2010. I am now attending leadership counsel meetings with about 30 other liberty group leaders in Colorado as we plan strategies about how to grow the movement statewide. Our Tea Party has launched a program called "adopt a candidate." We are supporting three candidates for the Colorado House whom are out of the district, but have a good chance at recapturing seats currently held by liberal democrats. We're offering classes to members, (now estimated at close to 400) called Restoring Moral Government, including lessons in American history and civics, along with some simple economics as to why our country and our dollar is in deep trouble, all with an overlaying theme

of our nations religious roots. We've all reacquainted ourselves with the U.S. Constitution and we're distributing copies of these founding documents and asking folks to read them.

We had ignored our country and our nation's safety for too long. We honestly believe that we will and can take our nation back from those who would transform us into yet another socialist, liberty denying nation. We aren't naive, we know those forces are strong and we know nothing is assured, but America is awake again. Whatever our differences are as a people, we once again are coming together with a common national purpose. There are deep political divisions, wider and more strongly entrenched than perhaps any other time in our history. We know we must prevail; we must be able to tell our children that they too will live in a free America. We will tell them what we did today, why we had to do it, and that it will be up to them to not let it happen again. They must know they cannot forget this time and that they cannot fall asleep.

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If there must be trouble, let it be in my day, that my child may have peace.

Thomas Paine