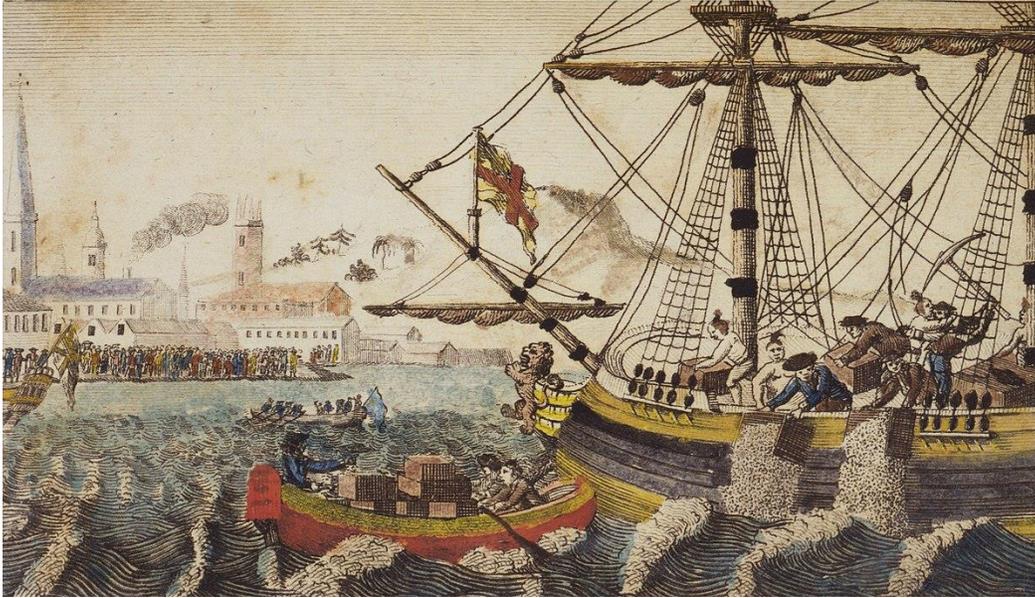


The Boston Tea Party



¹ The Boston Massacre was over and had become only a memory. England had repealed most of the new laws and taxes. In 1773, however, they had decided to place a small tax on tea. This time, more colonists started to think it was time to rebel. They were upset because they felt their rights were being abused.

² One million American colonists drank tea twice a day. The British East India Company brought most of the tea to the colonies. They would sell the tea to merchants in the colonies. The merchant sold the tea to the colonists. The merchants would sell the tea for a little more than they paid for it. This way, everyone made money.

³ Soon the British East India Company was broke. A lot of tea was not being sold. It sat in warehouses. Colonists would not buy the tea. They did not want to pay the taxes. Colonists did not think it was right for England to tax America because they had no one to speak for them in Parliament.

⁴ Parliament tried to help the British East India Company. They passed the Tea Act in 1773. The company did not have to sell their tea to colonial merchants. They could sell it to the colonists. Colonists would still have to pay the tea tax. They would save money though buying the tea directly. They would not have to pay the higher price that tea merchants charged. The tea would be cheaper.

⁵ England thought this would make the colonists happy. They would not have to pay as much for the tea. England was wrong. Tea merchants were angry because the tea would not be sold to them first. They would lose a lot of money. The merchants were furious. People who drank tea were also angry. They thought it was a trick. England was trying to trick them into accepting the tea tax. This meant they had the right to tax the colonists.

⁶ A new boycott was started. Women made tea out of other things. They used raspberry leaves. Some people called it freedom tea. People started to drink coffee instead. Groups of colonists did not let the ships unload their tea.

⁷ Three ships came to Boston, Massachusetts in November 1773. The Governor, Thomas Hutchinson, said that they should unload their tea. Colonists did not agree. On December 16, a group of colonists went to the Old South Church. They sent a message to the governor. They wanted the governor to send the ships away. He would not. He told the colonists the ships would unload the tea.

⁸ Another group of angry colonists suddenly came to the meeting. They disguised themselves as Mohawk Indians. They waved hatchets in the air. These colonists left the meeting and went to the harbor. They went on the ships. They hacked open 342 chests of tea and dumped it into the harbor. What they did became known as the Boston Tea Party.

⁹ The colonists had made their point. They showed how unhappy they were with the tax. It had only taken a short time to dump the tea in the harbor. The effects of what they did would last a long time. The government in England was very angry. They would punish Boston for destroying the tea. Early in 1774, Parliament would pass a series of laws called the Coercive Acts. To the colonists, they became known as the Intolerable Acts.