BOSTON TEA PARTY

SHIPS & MUSEUM ★★★★★ DECEMBER 16, 1773

A REVOLUTIONARY EXPERIENCE℠

"Friends! Brethren! Countrymen! That worst of plagues, the detested tea, shipped for this port by the East India Company is now arrived in Boston Harbor!"

-Sons of Liberty letter, Nov. 29th, 1773

Join Samuel Adams as he leads a spirited town meeting.

You are about to take part in "the single most important event leading up to the American Revolution." You are encouraged to be loud, participate, and play along! Your Host will encourage you to yell "**Hear, hear!**", or "**Huzzah!**" when discussing throwing tea into Boston Harbor. They will also prompt you to yell "**Boo!**" or "**Fie!**" when discussing taxes, King George III, and Parliament. Let King George hear your voices from this very room!

Before we begin, please read the following safety information:

Ladies and gentlemen, Historic Tours of America is proud to welcome you to the Boston Tea Party Ships & Museum. Due to the unique nature of this attraction, there is some important safety information of which you should be aware. Once you leave this room you will be on a floating nautical exhibit. Please watch your step and use the handrails when boarding ships and using gangways. Should there be an emergency during your visit to the museum or the ships, follow the gangways back to this building and use the exit doors provided. Please silence all cell phones and electronic devices. The use of cameras is permitted in this room, on the ships and open air decks, but not permitted in the museum below. Please stay with your Boston Tea Party Host throughout your experience and be aware that you are no longer on dry land. The only thing we wish to dump into the harbor is the tea.

TOWN MEETING

Boston Circa 1773

It is December 16th, 1773 and you are a citizen of Boston attending an important town meeting! Attending this meeting are Sons and Daughters of Liberty, those who believe they have a right to representation in Parliament and should oppose unrepresented taxes. The Sons of Liberty and Loyalists, those who believe that we should honor the King's laws, have fought over what to do with the arrival of the contested tea. Three ships—the Eleanor, Dartmouth, and Beaver—have arrived in Boston Harbor carrying 340 chests of East India Tea. Francis Rotch, the owner of the ships Dartmouth and Beaver has been sent to Milton, Massachusetts to plead with Royal Governor Thomas Hutchinson to allow his ships to return to England without unloading this tea. If that tea is unloaded and the tax is paid, then the citizens of Boston will be forced to pay even more of these unrepresented taxes! During this meeting Samuel Adams will remind you that the colonies have been taxed repeatedly by King George III and Parliament without the colonies having any representation in British government. The Stamp Act taxed all paper goods, even playing cards and dice! The Townshend Acts taxed lead, paint, glass, and tea. The Sons of Liberty have protested against past taxes forced upon them without representation, often through protests, petitions, and boycotts of British trade goods. The Patriots' actions have forced the repeal of these past laws, but Boston now gathers together to protest this new tax on tea. While you await the return of Francis Rotch, you will be led by a Patriot as the Body of the People decides "salt water and tea will mix tonight." Samuel Adams ends the meeting by giving the secret signal, "There is nothing more a meeting can do to save this country!" Don your symbolic Mohawk disguises and follow your Patriot down to Griffin's Wharf!

The Boston Tea Party, December 16th, 1773

THE DESTRUCTION OF THE TEA

Follow your Patriot as you march to Griffin's Wharf to dump the tea into Boston Harbor! Join your host in shouting, "Dump the tea, into the sea!" and make sure you wear your Mohawk disguise! These feathers are inspirational symbols of the Mohawk Nation of Native Americans and their independence here in North America. The Sons of Liberty honor that spirit of autonomy by wearing feathers this night. The patriots also hid their faces using dirt or soot and hid themselves under heavy cloaks. Once you arrive at Griffin's Wharf, you will board one of two ships--the brig Beaver or the ship *Eleanor*--where you encounter a fellow Son of Liberty. He will remind you that what you are about to do is considered treason by the Crown. Just 500 yards away two warships, the *HMS Somerset* and *HMS Boyne*, are at anchor and watching our every move. You must swear to never reveal the names of anyone assembled here. We will throw the tea overboard, steeping a salty brew in the waters of Boston harbor! Over the next three and a half hours about 90-150 Sons of Liberty will destroy over 90,000 lbs of tea (over 45 tons) estimated at a value of £10,000 (by modern values, nearly $1.5 million of tea.)

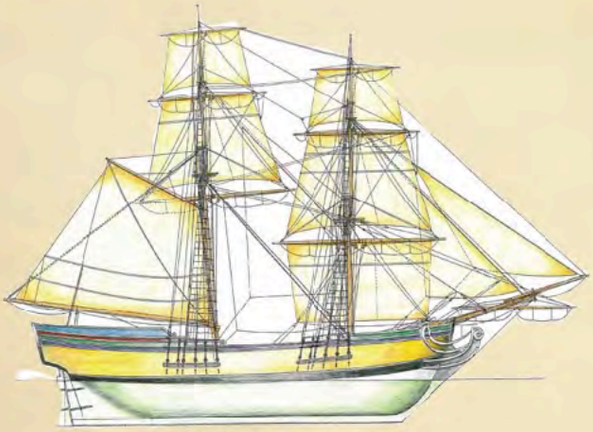
The East India Company 'merchant mark'

Our protest is also against the East India Company and its monopoly over the tea trade in British Colonies. The East India Company is in deep debt to the British Empire and has a surplus of over 17 million pounds of tea. Some of this tea has been sitting and rotting in London warehouses for over four years! Parliament passed the Tea Act to allow the East India Company the right to be the only merchant allowed to sell tea in North America. This pushed Boston merchants out of business, and if Parliament can destroy the market for Tea, Patriots fear Parliament will do this with other goods as well. Look for the merchant mark of the East India Company on the sides of the cursed tea chests!

Once the destruction of the tea is complete, you may explore the ship's hold and aft cabin. Below decks, you will find various cargoes including barrels of whale oil, rum, and molasses, as well as pine barrels containing wheat and other dry goods. There are many trunks containing supplies, and furniture for homes. You may even encounter the Captain of the vessel writing in his journal about the events that have just transpired.

Throw the tea into Boston Harbor!

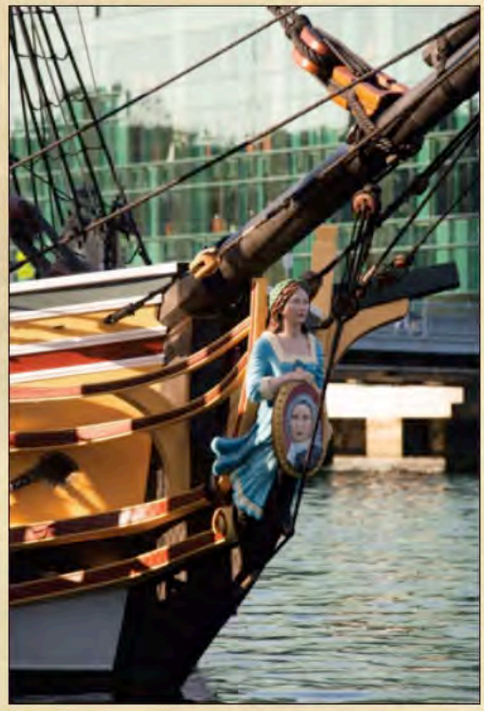
BRIG *BEAVER*:



The Brig Beaver

This ship is a replica of the original brig Beaver which was built in 1772 in Scituate, Massachusetts. She was owned by the Rotch Family of Nantucket. The Beaver was predominantly a whaling vessel, but also transported other cargoes; such as tea. The ship usually sailed with a crew of 8-10 men when she was trading, several more when she was whaling. The *Beaver* was captained by Hezekiah Coffin, a Quaker mariner. The *Beaver* was the last ship to arrive in Boston Harbor, bearing 112 chests of East India Company tea. She was delayed in mooring as a result of a case of smallpox amongst the crew. The ship was quarantined at Rainsford Island where she underwent cleansing and was smoked with sulfur. She arrived in at Griffin's Wharf on Wednesday December 15, 1773; the day before the Boston Tea Party. Captain Coffin was worried that in our Destruction of the Tea, the Sons of Liberty might destroy some of the fine furniture and other cargo on board the *Beaver*. However, the Sons of Liberty made a promise that no cargo but Tea would be destroyed this night and no harm would come to the crew of the vessel. The Sons of Liberty kept their word and did not destroy anything but Tea on board the brig Beaver.

ELEANOR:



The bow of the ship Eleanor featuring the ship's owner, John Rowe.

This ship is a replica of the original ship *Eleanor*, one of several vessels owned by leading Boston merchant, John Rowe. The *Eleanor* was the second vessel to arrive at Griffin's Wharf on Thursday December 2, 1773. She is fully rigged with three masts, and was known as a "constant trader", meaning she carried cargo and was never used for whaling. The *Eleanor* carried 114 chests of tea and was captained by James Bruce, a Tory sympathizer. Bruce added the tea to the ship's cargo against John Rowe's wishes. Rowe would later say that he would have given "500 guineas for Bruce not to take the tea aboard the ship." On this night, the Sons of Liberty urged their fellow patriots that "no tea must survive this night." Apprentices and younger patriots grabbed brooms to sweep the deck clean of any leftover loose leaf tea!

GRIFFIN'S WHARF

As your journey continues on Griffin's Wharf, you will learn additional details about the night's events and those involved in the Destruction of the Tea. Find your character's name on the list of Boston Tea Party participants! In the past, Boston's protests have often been violent, even riotous affairs! However, on this night the Sons of Liberty harmed no members of the vessel's crew and only one item other than tea was destroyed this night. A single padlock was destroyed on the Dartmouth during the night's events, but the Sons of Liberty secretly returned another working padlock to the ship the next morning!

Hear from both a Patriot and a Tory the morning after the Boston Tea Party

THE NEXT MORNING. . .

The morning after the Destruction of the Tea comes upon Boston like any other. We know that we have crossed a dangerous threshold. Our Governor, Thomas Hutchinson said that this is the "boldest stroke which has yet been struck in America." Beneath this rush of high spirits a divide is growing in Boston. You will make your journey past Sarah--a patriot supporter, and Catherine-- a Tory sympathizer. Catherine remains steadfastly true to the King and views the British troops who occupy the town of Boston as protectors from the Sons of Liberty's riots. Catherine, like many Tories, thinks the Sons of Liberty are creating more problems here in Boston instead of solving them. Sarah sees the Redcoats, another name for the British troops, as occupiers. Sarah believes that the Destruction of the Tea will bring Parliament around to end the taxation, much like their past protests ended previous unrepresented taxes. Sarah took part in the patriot's non-importation agreement; the agreement to not buy or sell goods taxed without representation. Sarah also believes that all true Bostonians should refuse to drink tea until the tax is repealed. They argue about where their loyalties lie and the dangers that may lay ahead now that the King's tea has been destroyed.

THE ROBINSON HALF CHEST

Despite all efforts to destroy the evidence, some remnants of tea chests, and of the tea, float on Boston Harbor. The vial you see before you, on loan from the Old North Church, contains tea found in the boot of a participant, curiously preserved in liquid form.

Later that morning a discovery is made on Dorchester Flats. Young John Robinson finds a tea chest along the shore. He takes it home and hides it under the stairs and goes off to fight in the Revolutionary War. The Robinson Tea Chest, and its story, is handed down through the family for generations and is the only known surviving tea chests from the Boston Tea Party of 1773.

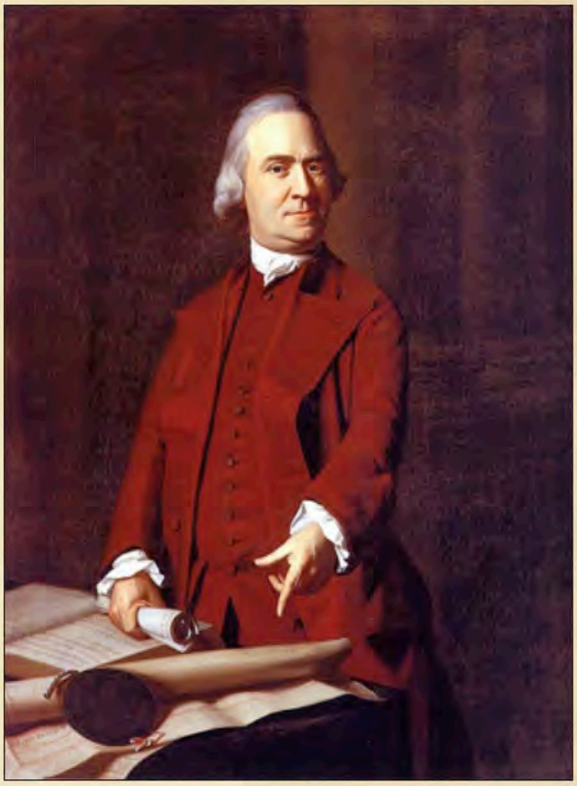
The Robinson Half Chest

The tea chest bears signs of its place in the home. A 9-Men's Morris game was carved into its bottom and flowers were painted on its side. Over the years it was used to hold dolls and even a litter of kittens!

This humble tea chest has survived a trans-Atlantic crossing, has been hacked open with hatchets, submerged in seawater, and inspired a revolution. Today is rests over the very same body of water in which it was cast on that fateful night in 1773. This American treasure is ready to inspire a new generation of patriots. It truly is a "box worth keeping".

THE PORTRAIT GALLERY

King George III



Samuel Adams

Next, you will find our portrait gallery, showcasing the names and faces of many Patriots fighting against unjust taxation, and the Lords enforcing these taxes. Featured prominently are King George III and Samuel Adams. It took six weeks for the news of the Boston Tea Party to reach England. Parliament and the King's reaction were as swift as they were harsh! Though these two men never met face to face, their difference of opinions and poignant words show the division forming across the British Empire.

In 1774, King George III punishes Boston through a series of laws called the Coercive Acts; in the colonies they are called the Intolerable Acts! In this, they shut down Boston Harbor with a blockade, eliminate Boston's elected body of officials, remove the power of many of Boston's courts and replace that power in London, and put Boston under military control. By February 1775, the King declares that New England is in a state of rebellion and men like Samuel Adams and John Hancock should be arrested for treason. He draws a line in the sand saying, "The die is now cast, the colonies must either submit or triumph. Blows must now decide if you are to be subject to England, or independent."

Rather than remain divided in times of turmoil, New England and the other colonies began to unite for the common cause of opposing the oppressive Coercive Acts. In September 1774, 12 out of 13 colonies united for the First Continental Congress to discuss the course and direction of these colonies. In 1775, Patrick Henry would say "I know not what course others might take, but as for me give me liberty, or give me death!"

THE MINUTEMAN THEATRE & *LET IT BEGIN HERE*

16 months have now passed since the Boston Tea Party. The Intolerable Acts did not punish Boston into submission, instead these new laws laid more kindling on the fires of Revolution. The growing tension has caused the removal of Royal Governor Thomas Hutchinson. Enter in his place, General Thomas Gage who enforces martial law and blockades the port of Boston. This dispute between England and her colonies is no longer about taxes, it has evolved. Something has changed in the hearts and mind of the people. It now seems inevitable that the conflict between crown and colonist can only be settled on the field of battle.

Redcoats take Lexington Green

Let It Begin Here is an award winning film that depicts the battle of Lexington Green, and the shot heard around the world. Watch as Paul Revere makes his midnight ride to inform the surrounding countryside that a British regiment was on the move and watch as the Minutemen muster up the courage to stand up to the might of the British Regulars. Please note: This film contains scenes depicting battles and will be quite loud, and may too intense for children. If you need assistance during this film, please inform your Host.

CONCLUSION

"Human nature itself is evermore an advocate for liberty. There is also in human nature a resentment of injury, and indignation against wrong. A love of truth and a veneration of virtue. These amiable passions, are the latent spark... If the people are capable of understanding, seeing and feeling the differences between true and false, right and wrong, virtue and vice, to what better principle can the friends of mankind apply than to the sense of this difference?"

-John Adams

The Boston Tea Party was the single most important event leading up to the American Revolution.

On behalf of the Boston Tea Party Ships & Museum, and Historic Tours of America, thank you for joining us today! Please make sure to stop in Abigail's Tea Room, featuring the historic teas involved in the Boston Tea Party, as well as delicious sandwiches, cookies, and other refreshments.