

Lesson 7: The Boston Tea Party

Content Question

How did the Boston Tea Party change the relationship between the colonies and England?

Topical Essential Questions

How can we “know” what happened at an historical event of the distant past?

What are similarities and differences between modern protests and colonial protests?

Overarching Essential Question:

What are the causes of the American Revolution?

Learning Objectives

Students will be able to analyze the causes and effects of the Boston Tea Party.

Students will be able to evaluate the extent to which the goals of the protesters were achieved.

Students will be able to reconstruct the events that happened at the Boston Tea Party through a primary source investigation.

Students will be able to make past to present connections between colonial and modern protests.

Do Now:

Read and annotate this summary of the Boston Tea Party.
Why did the colonists protest British taxes?

Townshend Act of 1767:

Tea Act of 1773:

Intolerable Acts of 1774:

In 1773, Britain's East India Company was sitting on large stocks of tea that it could not sell in England. It was on the verge of bankruptcy. In an effort to save it, the government passed the Tea Act of 1773, which gave the company the right to export its merchandise directly to the colonies without paying any of the regular taxes that were imposed on the colonial merchants, who had traditionally served as the middlemen in such transactions. With these privileges, the company could undersell American merchants and monopolize the colonial tea trade. The act proved inflammatory for several reasons. First, it angered influential colonial merchants, who feared being replaced and bankrupted by a powerful monopoly. The East India Company's decision to grant franchises to certain American merchants for the sale of their tea created further resentments among those excluded from this lucrative trade. More important, however, the Tea Act revived American passions about the issue of taxation without representation. The law provided no new tax on tea. [Lord North](#) assumed that most colonists would welcome the new law because it would reduce the price of tea to consumers by removing the middlemen. But the colonists responded by boycotting tea. Unlike earlier protests, this boycott mobilized large segments of the population. It also helped link the colonies together in a common experience of mass popular protest. Particularly important to the movement were the activities of colonial women, who were one of the principal consumers of tea and now became the leaders of the effort to the boycott.

Various colonies made plans to prevent the East India Company from landing its cargoes in colonial ports. In ports other than Boston, agents of the company were "persuaded" to resign, and new shipments of tea were either returned to England or warehoused. In Boston, the agents refused to resign and, with the support of the royal governor, preparations were made to land incoming cargoes regardless of opposition. After failing to

turn back the three ships in the harbor, local patriots led by [Samuel Adams](#) staged a spectacular drama. On the evening of December 16, 1773, three companies of fifty men each, masquerading as Mohawk Indians, passed through a tremendous crowd of spectators, went aboard the three ships, broke open the tea chests, and heaved them into the harbor. As the electrifying news of the Boston "tea party" spread, other seaports followed the example and staged similar acts of resistance of their own.'



When the Bostonians refused to pay for the property they had destroyed, [George III](#) and Lord North decided on a policy of coercion, to be applied only against Massachusetts, the so-called [Coercive Acts](#). In these four acts of 1774, Parliament closed the port of Boston, drastically reduced the powers of selfgovernment in the colony, permitted royal officers to be tried in other colonies or in England when accused of crimes, and provided for the quartering of troops in the colonists' barns and empty houses. The acts sparked new resistance up and down the coast.

Sourcing:

Contextualizing:

Analysis:

How does this newspaper article relate to the causes of the Boston Tea Party?

*Extract of a letter from Charlestown, South Carolina,
Dec. 2, 1765.*

“ The Petitions which were drawn up at the Congress were agreed to, without any Alteration, and signed afterwards by our Assembly. The Members who attended at New York, have received the Thanks of the House, and are re-elected again. At present every thing is very quiet here; our Liberty Boys being content to keep out the Stamps, do not injure, but protect, the Town; for some Time ago a Parcel of Sailors, having a Mind to make the most of this Suspension of Law, formed a Mob, to collect Money of the People in the Streets; but these Sons of Liberty suppressed them instantly, and committed the Ring-leaders to Goal. While they act thus coolly and determinately, we have little Reason to fear they will give up the Point, especially as the Country People are all unanimous in it; besides we have had an Offer of the whole Force of North Carolina, should it be wanted-----At Bermuda they had taken the Stamps,

P R O T E S T
A G A I N S T T H E
P R O C E E D I N G S
O F T H E
M E R C H A N T S.

Relative to the New IMPORTATION of TEA.

Addressed to the TRADESMEN and INHABITANTS of the Town and Province in general, but to the TRADESMEN of BOSTON in particular.

✂ AVOID THE TRAP. Remember the iniquitous Non-Importation Scheme. ✂

BOSTON, Nov. 3, 1773.

WHEREAS we have repeatedly been imposed upon by the Merchants of the Town of BOSTON, and thereby incurred heavy Taxes upon us; and we stand unjustly charged with the blame: And as it is now proposed by said Merchants to prevent the Importation of Tea from the India Company, whereby that Article may be sold for less than half the Price they can afford it; who now call for our Attendance for that Purpose at Liberty-Tree, You are hereby advised and warned by no means to be taken in by the *deceitful Bait* of those who falsely stile themselves Friends of Liberty.

T H E
P R O T E S T.

We the TRADESMEN of the Town of BOSTON therefore PROTEST against said Meeting in the following Manner, Viz.

I. THAT the present proposed Meeting is illegal and underhanded; and as it is our humble Opinion that it is subversive of that CONSTITUTIONAL LIBERTY we are contending for, and that such Proceedings will tend to create Disorder and Tumult in the Town, it is earnestly wished every well-disposed Member of the Community would use his Endeavors to prevent them in future.

II. THAT the Method of notifying said Meeting is mean and despicable, and smells of *Darkness* and *Deceit*, as the Notification for warning the same was not signed, and was posted in the Night.

III. We are resolved, by Divine Assistance, to walk *uprightly*, and to eat, drink, and wear whatever we can *honestly* procure by our Labour; and to Buy and Sell when and where we please; herein hoping for the Protection of good Government: Then let the *Bellowing* PATRIOT throw out his thundering Bulls, they will only serve to sooth our Sleep.

THE TRUE SONS OF LIBERTY.

Sourcing:

Contextualizing:

Analysis:

How does this newspaper article relate to the causes of the Boston Tea Party?

AT a Town-Meeting held in MARSHFIELD, the
31st of *January*, 1774, NATHANIEL RAY
THOMAS was chosen Moderator at said Meeting.

THE Vote was put to know the Town's Mind,
Whether he the said Moderator should have
Leave to speak his Mind and declare his Sentiments
relating to the Things mentioned in the Warrant ; and
it passed in the Affirmative.

And then the Vote was put to know their Minds,
Whether they will act upon the Warrant for said Mee-
ting ; and it passed in the Affirmative.

Then they proceeded to choose a Committee con-
sisting of seven Men, viz. Doct. Isaac Winslow,
Nathaniel Ray Thomas, Esq; Messrs Elisha Ford,
Seth Bryant, William Stevens, John Baker, and
Ephraim Little, to take into Consideration and draw
up what they should think proper to be voted by this
Town, and to make their Report ; and then the Mee-

Sourcing:

Contextualizing:

Analysis:

How does this newspaper article relate to the causes of the Boston Tea Party?

American Protests: A Past to Present Connection

What modern protest are you examining? Why?

What were the protestors fighting for?

What was the goal of the protestors?

What were the causes of the protest?

What were the consequences of the protest?

What actions did the protestors do to get their voice heard?

What were the reactions to these protests?

How does this protest relate to the Boston Tea Party?

Newspaper Article:

Exit Slip: Why was the Boston Tea Party a turning point to the start of the American Revolution? How will you incorporate the Boston Tea Party into your final project?