

Rolling Toward Revolution... January 2024



British Royal Coat of Arms 1771

In London: Word of the December events in Boston reached London by the end of the month along with returning shiploads of tea that were refused landing in New York and Philadelphia. HRH George III was personally affronted and Parliament was seriously displeased. Benjamin Franklin still in London as colonial agent, was suffering the consequences of the leak of the Hutchinson letters. On January 29th, he was publicly castigated and ridiculed before the Privy Council at Whitehall. It was one of the most painful moments of his remarkable life.

In Boston: The Sons of Liberty were universally mum. No one talked or said anything about who knew what or had been at the harbor that night for fear of reprisals. Paul Revere carried news of “the incident” south to the Committees of Correspondence in New York and Philly. (It would not be referred to as a “tea party” until many years afterward.).

Elsewhere in the Colonies: *New York City and Philadelphia acted in solidarity with Boston. They refused to land the tea and sent it back to England.* Not everyone shared John Adams’ enthusiastic assessment of “the incident”. George Washington of Virginia was concerned at the destruction of property. He thought it might incite copycat or mob actions. Time would prove him correct. In **New Jersey**, with the Provincial Assembly in recess, most delegates had returned home and were seeing in the New Year and Twelfth Night according to their respected religious traditions.

In the Raritan Valley: Hendrick Fisher, at home a few miles west of New Brunswick, was likely enjoying traditional holiday fare. He, the Van Hornes, and others who followed Dutch customs locally enjoyed apple beignets and sweetened Oliebollen (doughnuts), split pea soup, Duivekater, a holiday sweet bread, and of course, spice cookies! At the Parsonage of the Dutch Church, a few miles further west, frivolous traditions and parties may have been frowned upon, but the tradition of visiting and good wishes for the months ahead were likely shared across the valley among the residents of every denomination. A saucer of tea, taxed, smuggled or otherwise, was probably not the holiday beverage of choice. “The incident” had not yet fully penetrated their political consciousness or daily life.

Additional Sources

Britannia online: <https://www.britannica.com/biography/Benjamin-Franklin/Public-service>

Rose, P. (1998). *The Sensible Cook: Dutch Foodways in the Old and New World.*