



KIDS TALES FROM JAIL

Bristol Historical & Preservation Society

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KIDS

TALES FROM JAIL

TIME FOR TEA IN AMERICA

A Tea Party to remember

The first Tea Party thrown as an act of protest against the Tea Act (and Intolerable Acts) happened on December 3, 1773, in Charleston, South Carolina. Unlike the famous Boston Tea Party, the Charleston Tea Party had nothing to do with throwing chests of tea into the sea.

Christopher Gadsden and the Sons of Liberty led the Charleston tea party. Mr. Gadsden formed a committee to urge local merchants to boycott any further shipments of tea. Most merchants agreed, as long as they were allowed to sell the remaining tea that they already had on hand.

A cargo of tea arrived at the Charleston port on a ship called the *London*. The American Colonists refused the order and the tea sat undisturbed on the ship. This act of refusal did not make England happy.

On December 22, 1773, a group of colonists led by Mr. Gadsden requested that the captain of the *London* return to England with the tea. The captain received threatening messages telling him to “immediately weigh anchor or risk seeing his ship set ablaze”—with all 257 tea chests still aboard!

When the captain refused, the customs collector seized all 257 chests of tea and locked them in the basement of the Old Exchange (a government building).

Ironically, the confiscated Charleston tea was sold in 1776 in order to help fund the American Revolution!



A painting by Thomas Leitch of the *London* before it docked at Charleston, South Car-



What a way
to spark a
revolution!

Three Lesser-Known Tea Parties

Princeton, New Jersey

Sometime in late January, 1774, students attending the College of New Jersey (now known as Princeton University) grew tired of the British Intolerable Acts. They planned a boycott in opposition. Some students broke into the College's storage room where, according to a student named Charles Beatty, the students "...gathered all the steward's winter store of tea and having made a fire on the campus we there burned near a dozen pound, tolled the bell, and made many spirited resolves." One of these "spirited resolves" came in the form of an effigy (a model) of Massachusetts Governor Hutchinson. The students tied a crate of tea to the effigy and burned it in front of Nassau Hall. The students also made nightly visits to houses of suspected tea drinkers, took their tea, and burned it!

York, Maine

On September 15, 1774, the *Cynthia* sailed into the port of York, Maine (at this time Maine was part of Massachusetts). The *Cynthia's* cargo included 150 pounds of tea which was intended for personal use of the ship's owner, Jonathan Sayward. He was a known supporter of the Loyalists and a local judge. On September 23, 1774, the local Sons of Liberty (a group of colonists who sided against England) called a meeting to discuss what to do about the ship and its cargo. Those in attendance at the meeting voted to take the tea. The tea was then placed in a storeroom that just so happened to be "robbed" later that night by a number of "Pickwacket Indians." Two days later, the tea was "mysteriously" returned. Interestingly enough, Jonathan Sayward was able to keep his tea. And he did not have to pay any customs duty tax on it, as it was considered "stolen goods". The local colonists likely consumed the tea. John Adams, future President of the United States, said of the York Tea Party: "I find more persons here who call the destruction of tea mischief and wickedness than anywhere else."

Philadelphia, Pennsylvania

A British ship named *Polly* sailed up the Delaware River on Christmas Day, 1773. The ship arrived near the Port of Chester, Pennsylvania, carrying 697 chests of tea - the largest shipment of tea to the colonies ever! A small yet determined group of Patriots, who represented around 8,000 colonists, greeted Captain Ayers. This group was known as the "committee of tar and feathering." The committee told the captain that he should return to England. He was warned that if he unloaded his cargo, his fate would be that of tar and feathering (when a person was covered with tar and then feathers were stuck in the tar). Captain Ayers decided not to take any chances and turned his vessel around. With that, the largest shipment of taxed tea to the colonies was sent back to England.



A depiction of colonists reviewing the Intolerable Acts in Edenton, North Carolina.

What a close call! What would they have done with all that tea?



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Email us at info@bhpsri.org or call 401-253-7223

The Rhode Island Tea Party

You may know about the Boston Tea Party of 1773. You may have even heard about the 1772 “Burning of the HMS Gaspee” by a group of Rhode Island Sons of Liberty. But you may not know about the Providence Tea Party which happened right here in Rhode Island. On March 2, 1775, Rhode Islanders staged their own protest against British rule.

Views on this protest were mixed with some Rhode Islanders staying loyal to the King of England. Colonists who wanted to stay true to England were called Loyalists. There were Loyalists scattered throughout the colonies.

In response to the Boston Tea Party, the British passed a series of five punitive laws called the Intolerable Acts. Here are what many Rhode Island local business owners, loyalists, women, and others who were still on the fence thought about these laws:

Local business owners were opposed to the Intolerable Acts since they lost more money than they gained. The Intolerable Acts were implemented to stop illegal smuggling and move more money to Britain. Local business owners could no longer sell illegally-smuggled tea or other products that the Intolerable Acts singled out, such as paper and playing cards.

Loyalists remained true to the King of England. They despised the idea of protesting against the Intolerable Acts. The Loyalists viewed anyone standing up to the King as trying to make the situation worse in the colonies than it needed to be.

Women feared what the Intolerable Acts would do to their families, their husbands’ livelihoods, and their social gatherings. Most women became an integral part in the boycotting of all British made goods. Some women also partook in a few “Tea Parties” themselves! (see p5)

I never knew Rhode Island had its own tea party!



Some colonists simply did not know what to think. Instead of choosing a side, they agreed to remain neutral and silent until they could make up their minds.

So why was tea the targeted product? Well for starters, the Intolerable Acts had specifically singled out tea as an important product. Tea was very popular back in England and since most colonists were from England or of English descent, it is easy to infer that tea was popular in North America, too.

“Rhode Islanders were fed up with the British Crown. They decided to take a stand.”

By the mid 1800s, the British East India Company was drowning in tea and was financially struggling. Parliament attempted to help the company by passing the Tea Acts (one of the Intolerable Acts), which gave the British East India Company a monopoly over other sellers of tea. While this monopoly made the tea much cheaper, local merchants who sold tea still had to pay the tax. Thus, with England forcing them to distribute British East India Company tea only and pay the tax, business owners were losing money. Hence, “taxation without representation”.

Rhode Islanders were fed up with the British Crown. They decided to take a stand.

Unlike the Boston Tea Party, Rhode Islanders burned the taxed tea.

According to an article printed in the March 4, 1775, edition of the *Providence Gazette*, the Town Crier announced what had taken place “on Thursday last... At Five of the Clock, this Afternoon, a Quantity of India Tea will be burned in the Market-Place...”

The article went on to report that the group of colonists surrounded a large fire that was fueled by a barrel of tar.

The colonists began throwing papers unfairly taxed by England into the fire. One of the papers was a speech given by Prime Minister Lord Frederick North. The main event, as reported by the *Providence Gazette*, was when “many worthy women, from the conviction of an evil tendency of continuing the habit of Tea drinking, made free-will offerings of their respective stocks of the hurtful trash.” In short, 300 pounds of British tea was dumped into the fire!

Name: _____

Word Search

J	C	J	F	L	O	R	B	Y	M	J	G	R	D	P	I	N	M
J	O	O	N	T	L	W	H	C	G	A	Z	E	T	T	E	E	A
A	S	H	L	L	T	C	P	O	H	E	L	T	N	T	B	P	M
N	Y	I	N	O	O	E	Q	C	D	A	N	X	J	S	O	S	J
E	B	Q	U	A	N	Y	A	Q	H	E	R	G	J	Y	S	F	E
T	O	R	Z	W	D	I	A	P	V	M	I	L	L	R	T	I	F
S	Y	I	N	U	J	A	S	L	A	S	A	S	E	A	O	R	F
C	C	L	Q	L	W	J	M	T	I	R	O	I	L	S	N	E	I
H	O	L	O	A	M	I	Z	S	S	S	T	I	N	A	T	D	G
A	T	X	R	T	S	L	L	I	D	P	T	Y	W	E	N	O	Y
W	T	N	R	V	H	F	M	R	S	B	A	R	K	E	R	D	N
U	X	F	M	T	Q	D	A	C	O	L	O	N	I	E	S	I	B

Find the following words in the puzzle.
Words are hidden →, ↓, and ↘.

RHODE ISLAND
CHARLESTON
JANET SCHAW
MRS BARKER
COLONISTS
JOHN ADAMS

TEA PARTY
LOYALIST
COLONIES
ENGLAND
GAZETTE
BOYCOTT

EFFIGY
BOSTON
MAINE
FIRE

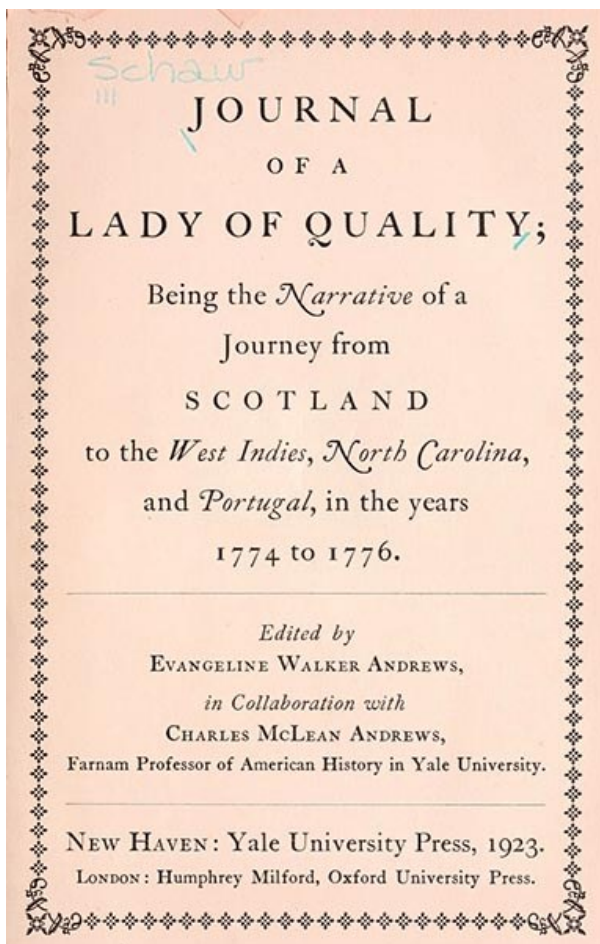
Women-Led Tea Parties

The Providence, Rhode Island, tea party was not the only tea party led by women protesting against unfair taxation without representation.

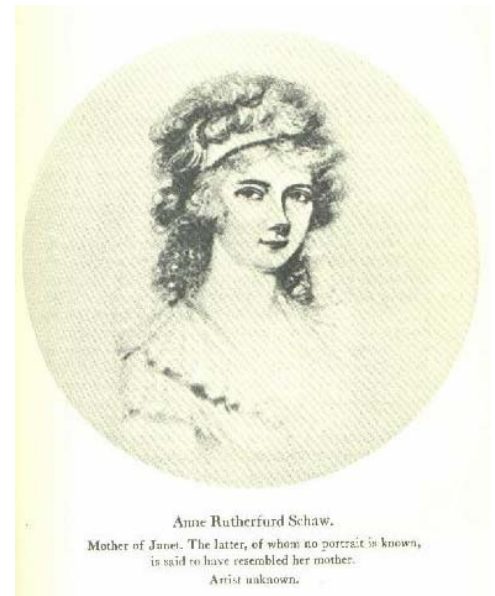
Women led two different tea parties in North Carolina. The first of the two took place in the city of Wilmington, where participants burned their tea. This women-led tea-burning event took place in late March or early April of 1774. There is only one eyewitness account known to exist – that of a pro-British observer, Janet Schaw. Ms. Schaw reported, “The ladies have burnt their tea in solemn procession, but had delayed however til the sacrifice was not very considerable, as I do not think anyone offered above a quarter of a pound...”

The second tea party in North Carolina led by women took place in the seaside town of Edenton. It occurred on October 25, 1774. Instead of taking and destroying chests of tea, the women held a peaceful protest. Penelope Barker was the organizer of this non-violent protest. She gathered 51 women and had them sign a statement saying that they would not agree to the taxes that Britain was imposing on the colonies. The women of Edenton also refused to drink any more tea or to wear any British cloth. Mrs. Barker wanted to make sure that England heard the voices of the Edenton women. On January 16, 1775, she sent the statement along with a note to the *Morning Chronicle* and the *London Advisor* for publication. Part of her note read, “American ladies follow the laudable example of their husbands and what opposition your matchless ministers may expect to receive from a people thus firmly united against them.”

Many women in the colonies participated in bold acts of resistance against British rule. Whether big and loud or small and quiet, these acts of resistance were all important events that led up to the American Revolution.



One of the only accounts of the Wilmington, North Carolina, Tea Party was written by Janet Schaw (a woman from Scotland). A “Lady of Quality” was understood to be someone of higher socio-economic class.



Portrait of Anne Schaw, Janet Schaw’s mother. It is believed that Janet Schaw looked very similar to Anne.

SOURCES

Ten Tea Parties: Patriotic Protests That History Forgot, by Joseph Cummins.

The Providence Gazette and Country Journal, Vol. XII. Saturday, March 4, 1775.

[The Other Tea Parties](#), Battlefields.org.

[Charleston Tea Party Protest](#), Low Country Walking Tours.com.

[The Providence Tea Party](#), New England Historical Society.

[Anyone Up for a Cup of Tea? The Providence Tea Party](#), National Park Service.

[Narragansetts \(Not Mohawks\) Blamed for Boston Tea Party](#), SmallStateBigHistory.com.

[Are There Instances of Raids Similar to the Boston Tea Party?](#) TeachingHistory.org.

[The Petition to the House of Lords Against the Boston Port Bill](#), NationalArchives.org.

[Loyalist Perspective on the Violence in Wilmington](#), NCPedia.org (Source for images of Janet's journal and Anne's portrait).

A Message from the Director:

It has been a delight to work with Max on this KIDS Newsletter! Max picked this fascinating topic, researched and wrote all the articles, and designed the entire newsletter all on his own—what an achievement! This kid is going places, right?!

Catherine W. Zipf
Bristol Historical & Preservation Society Director

[The Yorktown Tea Party](#), JYFMuseums.org (Source for image of colonists overlooking the Intolerable Acts).

[The Charleston Tea Party Protest](#), PowderMagazineMuseum.org (painting of the *London* in Charleston South Carolina).

This newsletter was made by Max Chartier. He is a rising Sophomore at Mount Hope High School. He enjoys reading and writing, as well as poetry. He is a proud member of the Mount Hope High marching band. He hopes you enjoyed this newsletter.

