

## Cause #8 - The Boston Tea Party - Primary Sources to Interpret

**Source 1 - Excerpt from *The History of the American Revolution* by David Ramsey (1789)**

Ramsay served as a surgeon in the Revolutionary Army and a member of the Continental Congress

“When the duties which had been laid on glass, lead and painters colors were taken off, a respectable minority in Parliament contended that the duty on tea should also be removed. To this it was replied, ‘That as the Americans denied the legality of taxing them, a total repeal would be [like an agreeing] with their claims; and that in order to preserve the rights of the Mother Country, it was necessary to retain . . . at least one of the taxed articles.’ “

1. According to the author , why was the tax on tea kept when the other taxes in the Townshend act on glass, lead, and paint were removed.
  - **Underline** key words in the excerpt that you used to support your answer.
  - State the answer **in your own words**.

**Source 2 - Excerpt from a letter printed in the newspaper *Rivington’s New-York Gazetteer*, 2 Dec. 1773, the author did not give his name, instead he called himself “An Old Prophet.”**

“Questions Respecting the Tea Act, Submitted to the Most Serious Consideration of Every Person in America”

**Question**

As there is an act of the British Parliament in being that would subjugate America to three pence sterling duty on every pound weight of tea imported from Britain, and as this duty is voted independent of and without the sanction of any of our American [legislatures], what ought to be done unto every one of those traitorous persons who shall aid or abet the importation of or landing the said tea in any part of America till that act is totally repealed . . . ?

**Answer**

Such base traitors to this country, without exception, should immediately and resolutely be dragged from concealment; they should be transported [sent to Britain] or forced from every place in America and loaded with the most striking badges of disgrace . . . .

**Question**

What will be the most effectual methods of proceeding to obtain a repeal of the said oppressive, unconstitutional act?

**Answer**

TO USE NO TEA, at least for the present, for if any person should give to the sellers more than the usual price for tea, he ought to be held up as a mortal enemy to American freedom.

2. What does the the author call people who would help import the tea?
  - **Underline** key words in the excerpt that you used to support your answer. **Label them 2.**
  - State the answer **in your own words**.

3. What does the author say should be done to such people?

- **Underline** key words in the excerpt that you used to support your answer. **Label them 3.**
- State the answer **in your own words.**

4. What does the author suggest would be the best form of protest against the Tea Act?

- **Underline** key words in the excerpt that you used to support your answer. **Label them 4.**
- State the term we have learned for this method of protest

**Source 3 - Excerpt a letter from “An Impartial Observer” printed in the newspaper *The Boston Evening-Post*, 20 December 1773**

. . . Previous to the dissolution [of the town meeting], a number of Persons, [dressed as] Aboriginal Natives from the complexion, approaching near the door of the assembly, gave the War Whoop, which was answered by a few in the galleries of the house where the assembly was convened. Silence was commanded, and a prudent and peaceable deportment again enjoined. The Savages repaired [left to go] to the ships which entertained [held] the pestilential Teas, and . . . began their ravage . . . They applied themselves to the destruction of this commodity in earnest, and in the space of about two hours broke up 342 chests and discharged their contents into the sea. A watch, as I am informed, was stationed to prevent embezzlement, and not a single ounce of Tea was suffered to be [stolen] by the populace. One or two persons being detected in endeavoring to pocket a small quantity were stripped of their acquisitions and very roughly handled. It is worthy [to] remark that, although a considerable quantity of goods of different kinds were still remaining of board the vessels, no injury was sustained. Such attention to private property was observed that a small padlock belonging to the Captain of one of the Ships being broke, another was procured and sent to him. I cannot but express my admiration at the conduct of this People!

5. What disguise did the men who participated in the Tea Act wear?

- **Underline** key words in the excerpt that you used to support your answer. **Label them 5.**
- State the answer **in your own words.**

6. What two things did the men make sure did not happen when they boarded the ships and destroyed the tea?

- **Underline** key words in the excerpt that you used to support your answer. **Label them 6.**
- State the answer **in your own words.**

**Source 4 - Excerpt from the newspaper *The Boston Gazette*, 20 December 1773.**

On Tuesday last, the body of the people of this and all the adjacent towns, and others from the distance of twenty miles, assembled at the old south meeting-house to inquire the reason of the delay in sending the ship Dartmouth with the East India Tea back to London; and having found that the owner had not taken the necessary steps for that purpose, they enjoin'd him at his peril to demand of customs official a clearance for the ship . . . .

After which they adjourn'd [until] the Thursday following [at] ten o'clock. They then met, and being inform'd by Mr. Rotch that a clearance was refus'd her, they enjoin'd him immediately to enter a protest and apply to the governor . . . and adjourn'd again till three o'clock for the same day. At which time they again met and after waiting till near sunset Mr. Rotch came in and inform'd them that he had accordingly enter'd his protest and waited on the governor for a pass, but his excellency told him he could not, consistent with his duty, grant it until his vessel was qualified.

The people, finding all their efforts to preserve the property of the East India Company and return it safely to London, frustrated by the . . . the collector of the customs and the governor . . . , DISSOLVED their meeting. But, BEHOLD what followed! A number of brave & resolute men, determined to do all in their power to save their country from the ruin which their enemies had plotted, in less than four hours emptied every chest of tea on board the three ships commanded by the captains Hall, Bruce, and Coffin, amounting to 342 chests, into the Sea !! without the least damage done to the ships or any other property. The masters and owners are well pleas'd that their ships are thus clear'd, and the people are almost universally congratulating each other on this happy event.

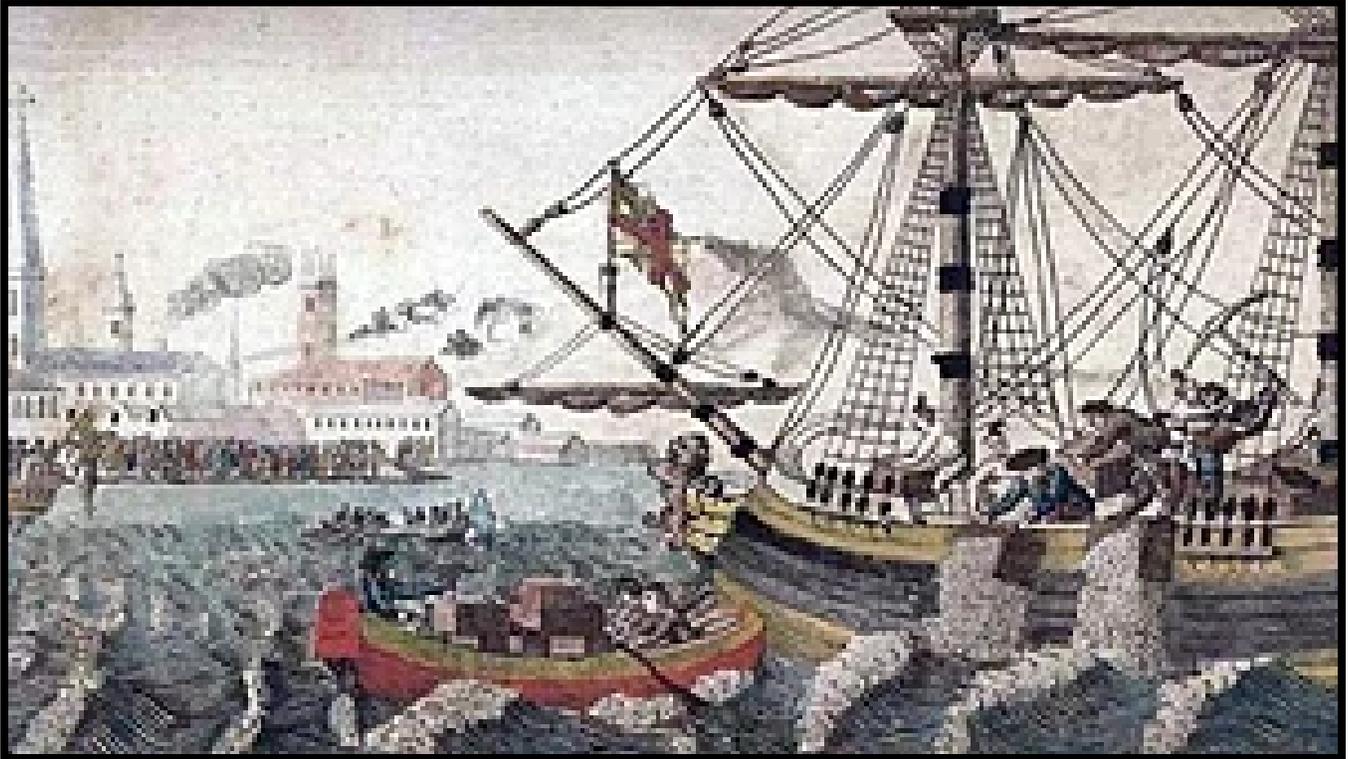
7. Describe one important part of the story found in this excerpt describing the Boston Tea Party from *The Boston Gazette* that was not in the version in *The Boston Evening-Post*.

- **Underline** key words in the excerpt that you used to support your answer. **Label them 7.**
- State the answer **in your own words.**

8. State one fact about the Boston Tea Party that was in the version in *The Boston Evening-Post* and was corroborated (confirmed or supported) in this version from *The Boston Gazette*.

- **Underline** key words in the excerpt that you used to support your answer. **Label them 8.**
- State the answer **in your own words.**

**Source 5 - A British depiction, after the American Revolution, of the Boston Tea party entitled “Americans Throwing the Cargoes of the Tea Ships into the River, at Boston,” printed in the book *History of North Americas* by W. D. Cooper (London, 1789)**



9. Name something you see in this picture that is not accurate according to the descriptions of the Boston Tea Party in the American newspapers.

- **Circle** the detail in the picture that you used to support your answer.
- Describe the detail **in your own words**.

10. What might be the reason this picture has the difference you noticed above?

- State your answer.
- **Be sure to explain** your reasoning.

Fitzgerald

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