



Newsletter of the *Fernando de Leyba Chapter*

Sons of the American Revolution

VOL. XIII Issue 19

April 2012

Meets 2nd Monday of every month (except July and August) at
Culpepper Restaurant in St. Charles, MO

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THE 1773 TEA ACT

On May 10, 1773, the British Parliament passed the Tea Act of 1773. This act allowed the English East India Company to sell tea in the American colonies at bargain prices – but there was still a tax on the tea. Patriot leaders believed the cheap tea was a ploy to get them to accept Parliament's right to tax the colonies.

Under the Tea Act, the East India Company could ship tea directly to the American colonies, where it would be sold by a specific group of merchants. These merchants were called tea consignees, and were the only merchants in the colonies who would be allowed to sell the tea. All of these merchants were Loyalists.

The tea, which today would be valued at over \$1 million, was due to arrive in Boston in late November of 1773. The Patriots tried to persuade the consignees to refuse the tea through public embarrassment and harassment. The tea consignees refused.

In the ports of Philadelphia and New York, the local Sons of Liberty had successfully demanded that the tea consignees resign. But in Boston, the tea consignees refused, ignoring a summons to the Liberty Tree.

THE TEA SHIP DARTMOUTH ARRIVES IN BOSTON

On Sunday, November 28 the Dartmouth arrived in Boston Harbor. The ship was loaded with East India Company tea and duty was payable the moment the tea was landed. If the duty was not paid within 20 days of the ships arrival, the authorities could seize both the cargo and the ship. The deadline for paying the tax was midnight, December 16.

Broadsides quickly were printed and plastered all over Boston, announcing a meeting:

Friends! Brethren! Countrymen! That worst of Plagues, the detested tea shipped for this port by the East India Company, is now arrived in the Harbor; the hour of destruction, or manly opposition to the machinations of Tyranny stares you in the Face...

MEETINGS AT OLD SOUTH MEETING HOUSE

On November 29, 1773, thousands of people gathered at old Faneuil Hall, but it was so crowded that the meeting moved to the Old South Meeting House.

The Old South Meeting House was the largest building in colonial Boston and was well known as a meeting place for the Patriots. Boston residents had previously flocked to mass meetings at Old South to protest the Boston Massacre. Led by Samuel Adams, the angry assembly had forced Acting Royal Governor Hutchinson to

remove the British troops from Boston and onto an island fort in the harbor. In 1772 and 1773, speakers at Old South Meeting house delivered fiery orations decrying the Boston Massacre. These speeches, attended by huge crowds including men, women and children, helped to keep outrage over the Boston Massacre alive, and made the Old South Meeting House a notorious hotbed of patriot resistance to British rule.

MEETINGS OF “THE BODY OF THE PEOPLE”

The crowd at Old South Meeting House included those not normally in attendance at Boston town meetings, such as men from surrounding towns and those without voting privileges. In order to vote at an official town meeting, a colonist had to be a male property owner over 21 years of age. In contrast, Governor Hutchinson described the meetings at Old South Meeting House as including “principally of the lower ranks of the people and even journeymen tradesmen were brought in to increase the number, and the rabble were not excluded.” The meetings were called “The Body of the People”, with resolves from the meetings signed, simply, “The people”.

Samuel Adams described the meeting on November 29 in a letter to a friend:

...the people met in Faneuil hall, without observing the rules prescribed by law for calling them together...they were soon obliged for the want of room to adjourn to the Old South Meeting House; where were assembled upon this important occasion 5000, some say 6000 men, consisting of the respectable inhabitants of this and the adjacent towns. The business of the meeting was conducted with decency, unanimity, and spirit.

At that meeting, Samuel Adams introduced a resolution that was met with approval:

“Whether it is the firm resolution of this body that the tea shall not only be sent back but that no duty shall be paid thereon?”

The meeting voted to put a guard of 25 men on the Dartmouth to ensure that the tea would not be landed. The meeting adjourned until the following day to allow the tea consignees time to make a proposal.

At 9:00 on Tuesday, November 30, thousands of colonists again crowded into the Old South Meeting House. The famed portrait painter John Singleton Copley, who was married to one of the tea consignee’s daughters, tried to help reach an agreement with the tea consignees. He read a message from them to the meeting. The consignees offered to store the tea subject to inspection until they received further instructions from London. This was not acceptable to the meeting, since it meant that the tea would be landed, and the tax would be due.

Sheriff Stephen Greenleaf interrupted the meeting with a proclamation from Governor Hutchinson demanding that the assembly “to disperse and to surcease all further unlawful proceedings at your utmost peril.” The meeting resoundingly refused to comply with the proclamation.

*It was solemnly voted by the body of the people of this and the neighboring towns assembled at the Old South meeting-house on Tuesday, the 30th day of November that the said tea never should be landed in this province ... [Signed] **The people.***

Abigail Adams described the meetings at Old South in a letter to her friend Mercy Otis Warren:

“The tea that bairfull weed is arrived. Great and effectual opposition has been made to the landing of it...the proceedings of our citizens have been united, spirited and firm. The flame is kindled and like lightening it catches from soul to soul...”

THE TEA SHIPS ELEANOR AND BEAVER ARRIVE AT GRIFFIN'S WHARF

The second tea ship, the Eleanor, arrived in Boston on December 2 and the last tea ship, the Beaver, arrived December 7. Resistance to the tea was mounting in Boston. On December 8 Governor Hutchinson ordered Admiral Montague not to let any vessel leave the harbor without a pass.

For almost three weeks, mass meetings at Old South Meeting House tried to find a way to prevent the tea from being unloaded. Francis Rotch, a Quaker from Nantucket Island, owned the Dartmouth. He was under great pressure by both the Patriots and the Royal Governor of the colony, Thomas Hutchinson. The Patriots wanted Rotch to turn his ship around and sail it back to England with the tea still on board. Hutchinson, on the other hand, wanted that tea unloaded and the tax paid. The deadline was fast approaching.

On the morning of December 14 a handbill was plastered throughout Boston:

Friends! Brethren! Countrymen! The perfidious act of your reckless enemies to render ineffectual the late resolves of the body of the people, demands your assembling at the Old South Meeting House,

precisely at ten o'clock this day, at which time the bells will ring.

Samuel Savage of Weston was chosen as moderator of this mass meeting at the Old South Meeting House. Samuel Adams called on the Committees of Correspondence from surrounding towns to “be in readiness in the most resolute manner to assist this Town in their efforts for saving this oppressed country.” All the towns surrounding Boston sent resolutions of support to the Boston meeting. Samuel Adams described the meeting:

... the people met again at the Old South church, and having ascertained the owner, they COMPELLED him to apply at the custom house for a clearance for his ship to London with the tea on board, and appointed ten gentlemen to see it performed; after which they adjourned till Thursday the 16th.

No one in the government would give Mr. Rotch permission to leave Boston until he unloaded the tea. Rotch did not want to sail the ship back to England without governmental permission, as the ship would most likely be fired upon from the armed fort at the entrance to Boston harbor. He could not risk his ship becoming damaged, or even destroyed. So the Dartmouth sat, anchored at Griffin's Wharf in Boston Harbor, ready to be unloaded.

DECEMBER 16, 1773: THE BOSTON TEA PARTY

At 10 o'clock in the morning on December 16, 1773, thousands of colonists gathered at the Old South Meeting House for a last meeting to decide what to do about the tea. Over 5,000

people, more than a third of Boston's entire population, crowded into the meeting house.

During the meeting, the Patriot leaders asked Francis Rotch to make a personal plea to Governor Hutchinson for permission to leave the harbor without unloading the tea. The Patriots were seeking a legal way to refuse the unwanted tea. Mr. Rotch left the meeting and made the long trip to where the Governor was staying in Milton, Massachusetts. Rotch asked the Governor to grant him a pass to sail the Dartmouth out of Boston harbor, safely past all the guns in the harbor, so that the tea could be returned to England. The Governor refused his request.

Thousands of people waited at the Old South Meeting House for Francis Rotch to return with the Governor's answer. It was near evening when he finally came back. Candles had been lit in Old South. Mr. Rotch reported that he had not received a pass and that he would not attempt to leave the harbor without the Governor's permission.

With the Governor's refusal, the only legal way the Patriots had to keep the ship from unloading had failed. At that moment Patriot Samuel Adams declared: "This meeting can do nothing more to save the country!" This was a pre-arranged signal to the Sons of Liberty to put a surprising plan into action.

Cries of "Hurrah for Griffin's Wharf!" and "Boston Harbor a Teapot Tonight!" were heard. At that point members of the Sons of Liberty began to disguise themselves, some as Mohawk Indians, and made their way down to the harbor. Joined by many more people along the way, these participants dumped 342 chests of tea into Boston Harbor, in the event now known as the Boston Tea Party.

The Committee of Correspondence sent word to New York, describing the events of that night:

*....we had a greater Meeting of the Body than ever. The Country coming in from Twenty Miles round, and every Step was taken that was practicable for returning the Teas. The Moment it was known out of Doors, that Mr. Rotch could not obtain a Pass for his Ship by the Castle, a Number of People hurrahed in the Street, and in a very little Time, every Ounce of the Teas on board of Capt. Hall, Bruce, and Coffin, was immersed in the Bay, without the least Injury to private Property. **The Spirit of the People on this Occasion surprised all Parties, who viewed the Scene.***

The day after the Boston Tea Party, John Adams wrote in his journal that **"This destruction of the tea is so bold, so daring, so intrepid and so inflexible, and it must have so important consequences and so lasting that I can't but consider it an epoch in history."**

And so it was. The Boston Tea Party was the turning point in the colonists' resistance to British rule. Today it remains a compelling image of protest for people all over the world.

Next meeting will be on May 14, 2012 and we will meet at Culpeppers 6:30 PM.



- Mike Dollard & Son's
- At Chapter:
- Guy Young (New member approved)
 - Martin White
 - Steve White
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At the April 9, 2011 meeting:

Meeting Opens 7:00 pm

1. **Fernando de Leyba Chapter** celebrates 15 yrs on May 4 2012.
2. Diane Borgman: Informed us that the USS MISSOURI Inc is charged \$400,000.00 per year to Moor in Pearl Harbor by the US Government.
3. Dennis Hahn: Convention Registration deadline is April 12, 2012.
4. Charles Lilly: Motion to Amend contribution to NSSAR for the 2013 National Congress Convention from \$10.00 per 42 members to \$10.00 per 35 current members. A fervent discussion and debate ensued. Motion Amended again to Donate 500.00 dollars even – (\$10.00 per member plus \$150.00) from Fernando De Leyba chapter treasury – Motion Passed.
5. Keith Morris: Wreaths Across America – FDL looking into becoming a fund raising organization for Wreaths Across America. More info and discussion in September.
6. Mike Zimmer: Received the “War Service Medal”.
7. PAT Jefferson: Received (2) Supplements.

Treasurer's report as of November 30, 2011:

Beginning Balance = \$2,700.88 – Ending Balance = \$2,662.38

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Genealogist report as of November 11, 2011:

At National:

- Pat Jefferson (2 supplements)
- John Wilson (1 supplement)
- Charles Lilly (1 more supplement)

- 8. John Wilson: Received (1) Supplement.
- 9. David Christian: A Physical Therapist to speak to FDL in the fall.
- 10. MOSSAR membership now totals 578 in 16 Chapters.

Old Business: NASSAR 122 Congress will be in Las Vegas N.V. July 6-11.
WWW.sar2012congress.com

Meeting Closed at 8:00 pm - Prompt

Program: Martin White – US Stamps of the Revolutionary War era.

25 Members and Guest in Attendance:

Ron Hauser, Stephen Baldwin, Denise Hahn, Shirley Hahn, Keith Morris, Barb Morris, Jim Borgman, Diane Borgman, Chuck Simms, Charles Lilly, John Rush, Bill Grote, Sylvia Grote, Dale Wiseman, Carol Wiseman, David Christian, Steven White, Martin White, Minnie White, Mike Zimmer, Nora Zimmer, John Wilson, David Hoffman, Charles Jefferson, Paul Smith

Yesterday is History. Tomorrow is Mystery?? Today is a Blessing!!!

Looking forward to seeing everyone on Monday...

Newsletter Editor – Paul Smith: plajmsmith@charter.net



*Fernando de Leyba
Chapter*

**15 CHASE CT.
Lake St Mo 63367**

