**There’s More to the Boston Tea Pary Than You May Know**

We’re all aware that this December 16th marks the 250th anniversary of Boston Tea Party, kicking off this anniversary cycle of the American Revolution. And we all know that on that day in 1773 a Sons of Liberty group dressed as Mohawk Indians boarded the British ships *Dartmouth, Eleanor, and Beaver* in Boston Harbor, dumping overboard 342 chests of tea worth over one million dollars in today’s currency, protesting the Tea Act and its hated tax. That this event united the often-disparate colonies in opposing British domination, even when that opposition hurt citizens’ pocketbooks and disrupted their lives, too is widely understood. Yet there is much more to learn about the history of this important event.

For example, Boston’s was not the first tea party. That honor belongs to Lexington, Massachusetts, where on December 12, 1773 locals gathered on the village common—yes, THAT Lexington Common—to burn a pile of tea in opposing the tax.

Boston’s was also not the only tea party that year. Local Sons of Liberty groups held tea parties in each city to which the British East India sent tea that December. Philadelphia’s tea party began on December 25, 1773, but unlike Boston it featured no property destruction and three days later the still-loaded *Polly* departed for England. New York’s tea party was delayed until the *Nancy* arrived in April 1774—first stuck on a sand bar, she endured two storms before finally reaching port—when the local Sons group blocked her docking and sent her back to England. Charleston, South Carolina impounded 257 chests that in 1773 arrived onboard the *London*, in November 1774 adding them to eight more chests taken from a second British effort to import tea on the *Magna Carta* and *Britannia*, dumping it all into Charleston Harbor.

The Boston party’s fame quickly spread, inspiring even more tea parties in the coming years. These included in Charlestown, Provincetown, and Dorchester, Massachusetts (all in December 1773), Princeton, New Jersey (January 1774), A second tea party in Boston (April 1774), Chestertown, Maryland (May 1774), York, Maine (September 1774), Annapolis, Maryland (October 1774), Edenton, North Carolina (October 1774), Greenwich, Connecticut (December 1774), and Wilmington, North Carolina (March 1775).

Virginia, too, had a tea party, in Yorktown on November 7, 1774. Inspired by the Boston Tea Party and to protest the Intolerable Acts, Virginia’s Revolutionary Council in August 1774 declared the colony would import no more tea. When in October the British ship *Virginia* docked at Yorktown bearing tea, patriotic Williamsburg merchants acted. Boarding the *Virginia* at 10 a.m., they seized the two half-chests of tea aboard and promptly threw them into the York River.

When we commemorate the Boston Tea Party this December, remember these other acts it inspired in the name of American liberty – including one right here in Virginia.