



Volume 20

Number 009

America's Revolution (80) – The Tea Act – II

Lead: In the 1700s the United States broke from England. No colony in history had done that before. This series examines America's Revolution.

Intro: *A Moment in Time with Dan Roberts*

Content: With Parliament's passage of the Tea Act in late spring 1773, an all-to-brief period of calm in colonial resistance to Britain's taxation schemes came to a crashing end. Gone were the respectful

petitions, the heartfelt arguments, Americans cut straight to the threat of violence, and all up and down the seaboard the consignees set to sell the dutied tea and ship captains bearing East India tea from England were forced to resign their commissions or haul anchor and flee.

First Philadelphia, then New York, took the lead in enforcing colonial repulsion at Parliament's attempts at control. Mass meetings enforced this opposition getting the tea merchants to abandon the project. New York Governor Tryon tried to get around this by planning to unload the tea when it arrived and store it under guard at the Battery. Unfortunately for his plans, *Nancy*, the ship bringing the tea was blown off course by a great storm and had to put into port in Antigua. When it finally arrived in New York in the spring the political situation

was out of the Governor's hands and *Nancy*, cargo still in its hold, fled to back England.

In Charleston merchants insisted that all tea, smuggled and legal, had to be banned or it would give the smugglers a financial opportunity. This produced confusion of which Governor William Bull gladly took full advantage. After twenty days he seized the tea for non-payment of the tax and locked it up. There is no evidence that was ever sold. Oddly enough, Boston usually the cockpit of colonial resistance was slow reacting to the Tea Act, but by October 1773, the city had awakened to the danger and would soon be issuing invitations to a Tea Party.

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