

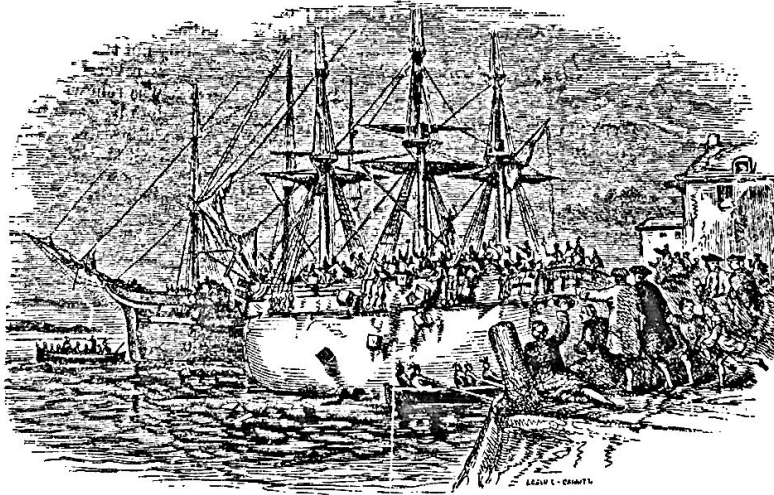
The Boston Tea Party

American colonists refused to buy goods from Britain because of the Townshend taxes. As British merchants lost more and more money because of the success of the colonial "non-importation" agreements they convinced Parliament to give in. Parliament removed all of the Townshend taxes except the tax on tea. By keeping the tax on tea Parliament was telling the colonists that they still had the right to place taxes on goods shipped to America.

American colonial leaders were not satisfied. They believed that laws should not be made without their consent. In other words, they felt that Parliament had no right to pass laws, especially tax laws, since they had no votes in Parliament.

The British continued to send tea to American port cities. Since many merchants had agreed not to sell the tea it began to pile up in warehouses. The British East India Company that produced the tea influenced Parliament to pass the Tea Act in 1773. The act removed all British taxes on tea except a very small import tax on tea shipped to America. Although the price of tea dropped, colonists still objected to the tax and refused to buy East India tea even though it was now cheaper than tea that was smuggled to the colonies.

The East India Company believed that the colonists would buy the cheaper tea and shipped half a million pounds of tea to Boston. When the *Dartmouth*, one of the tea ships, arrived at Boston the citizens organized meetings and demanded that the ship return with its tea to Britain. The governor refused.



BOSTON TEA PARTY

On December 16, 1773, Samuel Adams, a leader of the Boston Sons of Liberty, organized a group of men to take action. They disguised themselves as Mohawk Indians and boarded the *Dartmouth*. They worked through the night with axes smashing 342 crates of tea and dumped them into Boston harbor. The Sons of Liberty, although they dressed as Indians, wanted every-

one to know that they were responsible for dumping the tea in the harbor. The disguises were worn just to make sure that the British authorities in Boston would not be able to identify individuals and arrest them for destroying the tea.

The British were furious! In 1774 Parliament passed the Coercive Acts to punish Boston. Colonists called these acts "intolerable" and called on all the colonies to organize.

1. Why did the colonists refuse to buy tea?
2. What is meant by the expression "No Taxation without Representation"?
3. How can you show your opposition to what you consider an unjust law?
4. How did the Boston Sons of Liberty show their opposition in 1773?
5. Why do you think they decided to destroy the tea?
6. What other action could they have taken? Do you think it would have been effective?
7. What can we do today as American citizens to protest laws that we consider unjust?
8. How is it different today than it was in 1773?