

*The Boston Tea Party*

## Teaching Guide

### SEGMENT 3, WEBISODE 1

Please note: Each segment in this Webisode has its own Teaching Guide



#### Segment Overview



#### Let's Discuss

After Britain's costly victory in the French and Indian War, Parliament felt justified taxing the colonies to pay the war debt. When Parliament taxed sugar and passed other bills limiting colonial commerce, colonists denounced taxation without representation and boycotted British

goods. Parliament responded by stiffening its back; it passed the Quartering Act, which required colonists to feed and house British soldiers, and the Stamp Act, which demanded that virtually all documents bear a revenue stamp. Colonists believed basic political rights and English law had been violated. Secret societies such as the Sons of Liberty, led by fiery patriots, including Samuel Adams, began fomenting rebellion—or independence, depending on one's perspective. Passage of the Townshend Acts further trampled colonial rights and widened the gulf between the colonies and the mother country. When the royal governor of Massachusetts refused demands to send newly arrived tea ships back to England, colonists unconvincingly disguised as Indians boarded the ships and threw the tea into Boston harbor. Britain responded by passing the "Intolerable Acts" which closed the port of Boston, banned unauthorized town meetings, and further stripped the colonies of political power.

#### Teacher Directions

1. Discuss the following questions with students.
  - Why did colonists object to "taxation without representation"?
  - What party rocked Boston?
  - What acts were "intolerable"?
  - Who were the Sons of Liberty?
2. Make sure that students understand the following points.

Colonists objected to taxation without representation because they believed this violated their basic political rights as Englishmen. When Great Britain insisting on taxing tea, colonists led by the Sons of Liberty, a patriot group agitating for independence, boarded the ships and threw the tea overboard into Boston harbor. The British responded with several acts punishing the colonists in general and Boston in particular. The colonists felt these acts were "intolerable" and their enactment only stirred more anti-British sentiment.



## Teacher Directions

### Activity One

1. Distribute the Student Sheet: *The Liberty Tree*.
2. Students discuss the following questions.
  - Why do you suppose this was called the Liberty Tree?
  - How was a tree important in the American Revolution?
3. Explain to students that the Sons of Liberty, a secret society formed to encourage rebellion against Great Britain, included prominent patriot leaders such as Samuel Adams. In Boston, the Sons of Liberty met under an old elm tree that Adams called the Liberty Tree. This made the British so mad that they eventually chopped that tree down.
4. Students write a brief newspaper article describing British action in chopping down the Liberty Tree. The article should include why the tree was chopped down, its historical significance and colonial response.
5. Students use the 5 W's & H (Who, What, Where, When, Why & How) in their article.

### Activity Two

1. Distribute the Student Sheet: *A Party to Remember*.
2. Students work in small teams to examine the cartoon, read the first person account, and discuss the following questions.
  - What kind of “party” is this?
  - What are the men on the ship doing?
  - Is anyone stopping them?
  - Does George Hewes describe the party as a disorganized riot or a carefully planned and executed event?
3. Explain to students that these colonists—some of whom are thinly disguised as Indians—are dumping chests of tea overboard into Boston harbor in what became known as the Boston Tea Party. They are angry because the British Parliament has passed a tax on tea, and ordered that only the East India Company can sell tea in the colonies. The colonists viewed the tax on tea as taxation without representation. They were infuriated, and colonists in Boston demanded that three British tea ships leave the harbor. When the royal governor did not respond, two hundred men loosely disguised as Indians boarded the ships and dumped over three hundred chests of tea into the harbor.
4. Read the following account to the students.

One man who participated in the event, George Hewes, later described the Boston Tea Party.

*When the committee returned and informed the meeting of the absence of the Governor, there was a confused murmur among the members...many*

History Sleuth, Cont.

*of them crying out, "Let every man do his duty, and be true to his country"...*

*It was now evening, and I immediately dressed myself in the costume of an Indian, equipped with a small hatchet...and a club, after having painted my face and hands with coal dust...I fell in with many who were dressed, equipped and painted as I was.*

*When we arrived at the wharf...the commander of the division to which I belonged...ordered me to go to the captain and demand of him the keys to the hatches and a dozen candles. I made the demand accordingly, and the captain promptly replied, and delivered the articles; but requested me at the same time to do no damage to the ship or rigging. We then were ordered by our commanders to open the hatches and take out all the chests of tea and throw them overboard, and we immediately proceeded to execute his orders, first cutting and splitting the chests with our tomahawks, so as thoroughly to expose them to the effects of the water.*

*In about three hours from the time we went on board, we had thus broken and thrown overboard every tea chest to be found in the ship, while those in the other ships were disposing of the tea in the same way...We were surrounded by British armed ships, but no attempt was made to resist us.*

*We then quietly returned to our several places of residence, without having any conversation with each other, or taking any measures to discover who were our associates...*

### **Activity Three**

1. Distribute the Student Sheet: *Tar and Feather*.

Working with teammates, students discuss the following questions listed on the student sheet.

- What's going on here?
- Who's the man in the feathers?
- What's happening on that ship in the background?
- What do you see on the tree?
- Who might have drawn this cartoon—a colonist or someone from Great Britain?

2. Allow time for groups to share their answers with the class. Make sure students understand the following points:

The patriot group the Sons of Liberty met under a large elm called the Liberty Tree. They sometimes tarred and feathered loyalists who supported the king. In this painful and humiliating punishment, the victim was coated with hot tar and a basket full of feathers was dumped on him. In this British cartoon, "Paying the Exciseman," some Bostonians are pouring tea down the throat of a tax collector.

History Sleuth, Cont.



What do you  
Think?



Connections

### Activity Four

1. Distribute the Student Sheet: *We Have an Old Mother*
2. Students read Franklin's poem to answer the following questions, listed on the student sheet.
  - Why did Ben Franklin call England an "old mother"?
  - In what ways was England like an old mother?
  - In the poem, how did the author hope to fix this situation?

### Teacher Directions

1. Students, in small teams, discuss the following situation.

Would you want foreign soldiers staying at your house? What if you felt they had no business being in your country? How might you have protested unfair taxes and unfair laws? Would you have participated in the Boston Tea Party? Are there any laws today that you feel are unjust? How might you protest such laws?

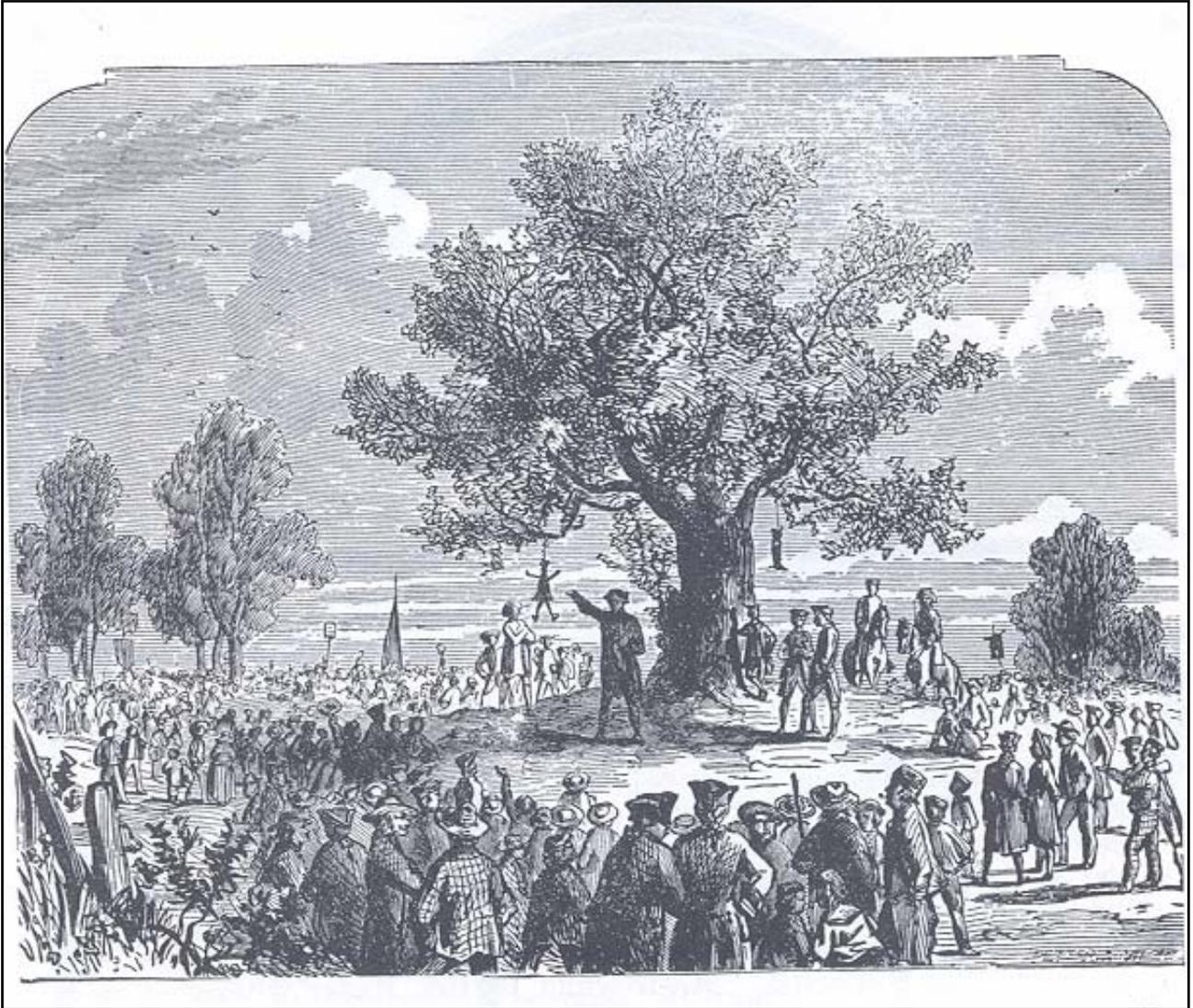
### Teacher Directions

Use the following activities with your students.

**Science** — Students read about Benjamin Franklin's experiments and inventions. Students can begin their research by reading Chapter 29, "Ben Franklin" of *Making Thirteen Colonies* by Joy Hakim.

**Language Arts** — Students read *My Brother Sam is Dead* by James Lincoln Collier and Christopher Collier or *Johnny Tremain* by Esther Forbes. Students who read both compare these two historical novels about the American Revolution.

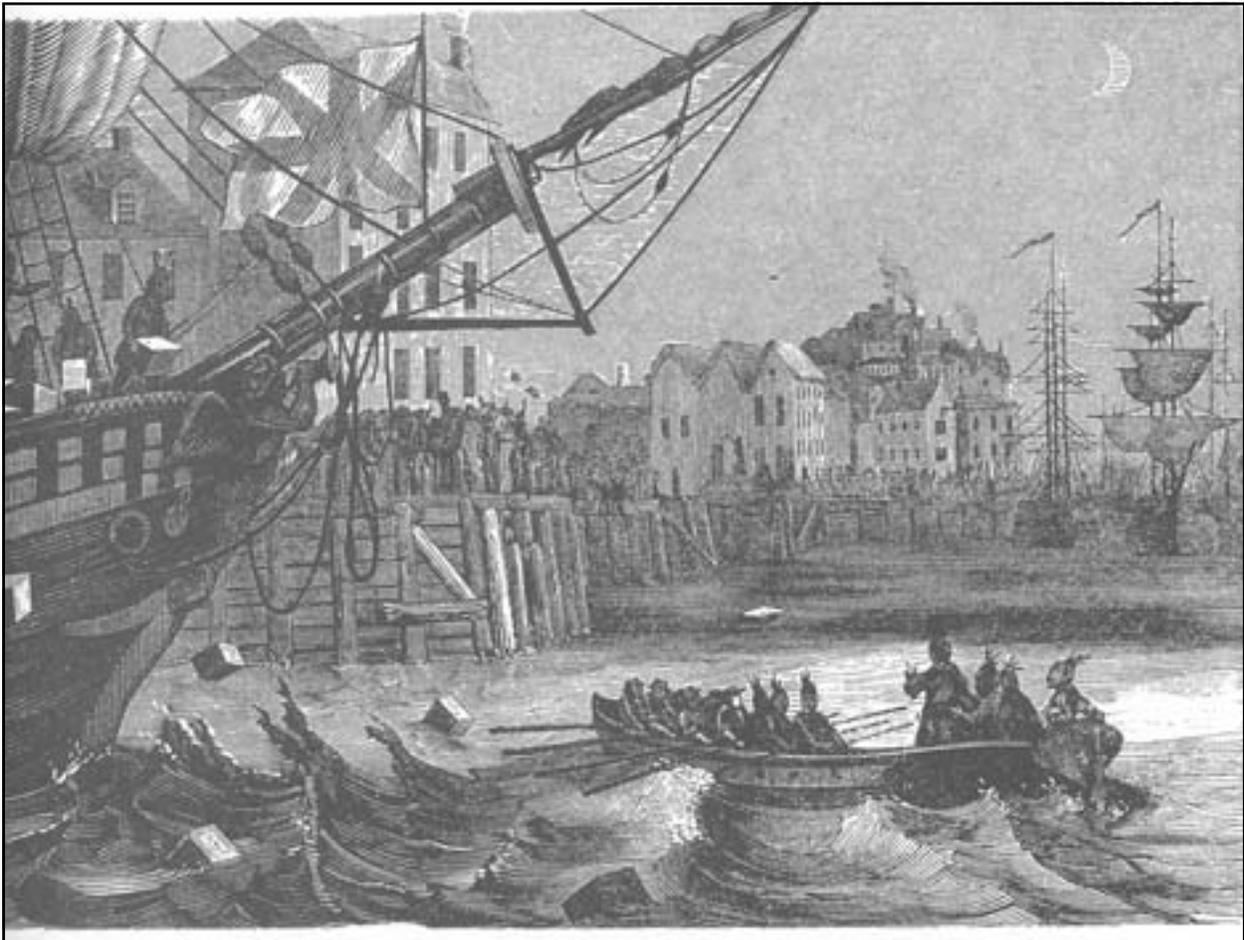
# *The Liberty Tree*



# A PARTY TO REMEMBER

*It was now evening, and I immediately dressed myself in the costume of an Indian, equipped with a small hatchet...with which, and a club, after having painted my face and hands with coal dust in the shop of a blacksmith, I repaired to Griffin's Wharf where the ships lay that contained the tea.... I fell in with many who were dressed, equipped and painted as I was, and who fell in with me and marched in order to the place of our destination.... We then were ordered by our commander to open the hatches and take out all the chests of tea and throw them overboard, and we immediately proceeded to execute his orders, first cutting and splitting the chests with our tomahawks, so as to thoroughly expose them to the effects of the water.*

—George Hewes, A participant in  
The Boston Tea Party



## *Tarred and Feathered*



- What is going on here?
- Who is the man in the feathers?
- What's happening on that ship in the background?
- What do you see on the tree?
- Who might have drawn this cartoon—a colonist or someone from Great Britain?

*Benjamin Franklin wrote this poem to make fun of people — such as King George III and his leaders — who believed the colonists couldn't rule themselves.*

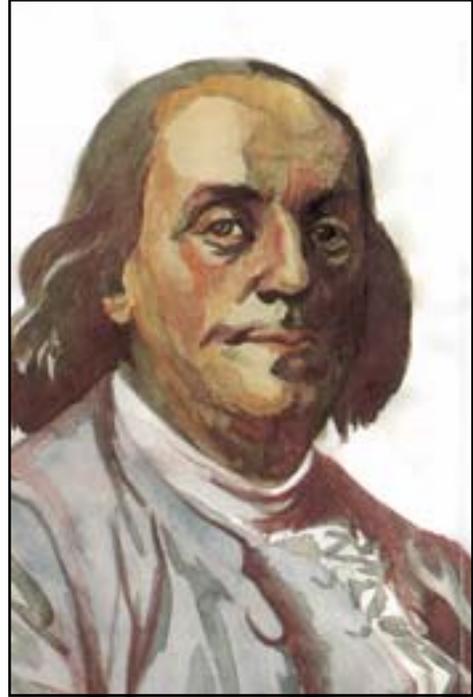
## **We Have An Old Mother**

We have an old mother that  
peevish is grown  
She snubs us like children that  
scarce walk alone  
She forgets we're grown up and  
have sense of our own  
Which nobody can deny, deny  
Which nobody can deny.

If we don't obey orders, whatever the case;  
She frowns, and she chides and she loses all patience  
and sometimes she hits us a slap in the face,  
which nobody can deny, etc.

Her orders so odd are, we often suspect  
That age has impaired her sound intellect  
But still an old mother should have some respect  
Which nobody can deny, etc.

We'll join in her lawsuits to baffle all those  
Who, to get what she has, will be often her foes;  
But we know it must all be our own, when she goes.  
Which nobody can deny, deny  
Which nobody can deny.



Benjamin Franklin