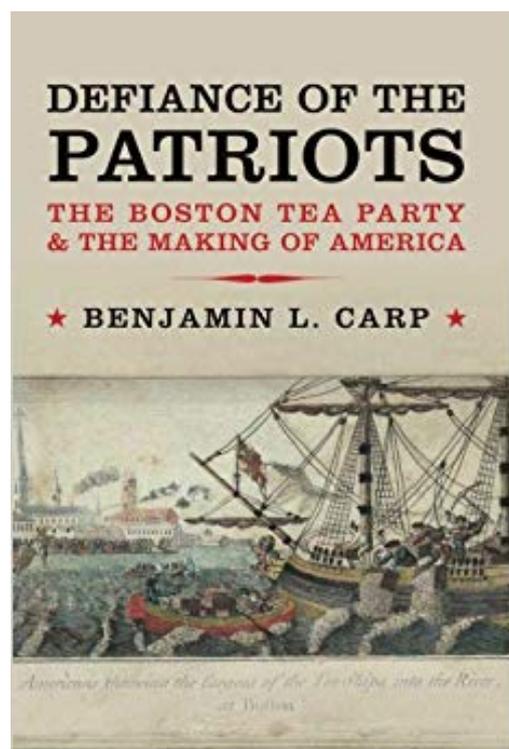


Defiance of the Patriots: The Boston Tea Party and the Making of America *by* Benjamin L. Carp



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ISBN: 0300117051

ISBN13: 978-0300117059

Author: Benjamin L. Carp

Book title: Defiance of the Patriots: The Boston Tea Party and the Making of America

Pages: 328

Publisher: Yale University Press; 1st edition (October 25, 2010)

Language: English

Category: Americas

Size PDF version: 1806 kb

Size ePUB version: 1978 kb

Size FB2 version: 1751 kb

Other formats: rtf docx docx lit

This thrilling book tells the full story of the an iconic episode in American history, the Boston Tea Party—exploding myths, exploring the unique city life of eighteenth-century Boston, and setting this audacious prelude to the American Revolution in a global context for the first time. Bringing vividly to life the diverse array of people and places that the Tea Party brought together—from Chinese tea-pickers to English businessmen, Native American tribes, sugar plantation slaves, and Boston’s ladies of leisure—Benjamin L. Carp illuminates how a determined group of New Englanders shook the foundations of the British Empire, and what this has meant for Americans since. As he reveals many little-known historical facts and considers the Tea Party’s uncertain legacy, he presents a compelling and expansive history of an iconic event in America’s tempestuous past.



Reviews of the **Defiance of the Patriots: The Boston Tea Party and the Making of America** by Benjamin L. Carp

Bladecliff

"Drank Green Tea from Holland - I hope - but don't know" - John Adams, 1771 (pg 77)

"An exasperated people, who feel that they possess power, are not easily restrained within limits strictly regular." Thomas Jefferson, 1773 (pg 118)

"Is it Lawful for a weary traveler to refresh himself with a Dish of Tea provided it has been honestly smuggled, or paid no Duties?" - John Adams, 1774 (pg 178)

As an American History enthusiast, I thoroughly enjoyed this particular accounting of the Boston Tea party and the events leading up to it. Not only does it give another, very interesting and well-written historical accounting, it also delves into the origins of the tea trade - the monopolies, the wealth, the incredibly lucrative opportunity to levy tax on it, and why it became so important to the Colonists in the first place. There's a lot more to the tale of tea than just a cup and saucer. And it provided the perfect excuse for a group of people struggling to be free of monarchies, "taxation without representation" and a "governing body" half a world away - to separate themselves once for all and seek a government "for the people, by the people"; an idea that seemed destined to take flight under the wings of such public rousers as James Otis, John and Samuel Adams, and the invisible, though determined, non-public actions of those known only as the "Sons of Liberty."

The entire background of the tea trade was fascinating - from the East India Company and its stranglehold over the trade issue, (not only of tea, but of spices, silk, gold and (yes) Opium!) to the catalyst of Tea itself that ultimately was responsible for the Separation that established America; fascinating that something so simple could become such a controversy. "It isn't as though we couldn't do without it!" wailed one frustrated patriot who was trying to drum up support for a non-violent boycott of the tea rather than become embroiled in an all-out confrontation. Famous last words!

Tea was actually referred to by some as "a drug" and even as an instrument of unrest used by the 'fairer sex" in their gatherings - perhaps unknowingly, but nonetheless with disregard and continuance behind parlor doors even as it threatened to become the catalyst for political uprising. Further examination of the subject proves that it wasn't only the ladies who couldn't give up their Tea, as is evidenced by the quote by Mr. Adams as he gathered with several of the Sons of Liberty.....sipping the contraband while quite possibly discussing what they were going to do about all those loaded ships in the harbor....history is sometimes a mystery.

I seek out books of this level. Benjamin Carp writes with enthusiasm, attention to detail without being dry, and I do highly recommend his book to anyone with an interest in the American Revolution. It is an important, interesting work; one that adds another, welcome dimension to my own American History collection.

Hiylchis

The Boston Tea Party remains one of the iconic events of American history 250 years later. It is one of the few events that nearly every American recognizes and for which she can provide at least a summary description. Benjamin Carp's *Defiance of the Patriots* provides a detailed rendering of not only the events of the "tea party" itself, but a comprehensive look at the state of the British Empire, the city of Boston, and the American colonies in general to give us a better understanding of why the Tea Party came about when and where it did and what it meant in the grand scheme of events

leading to the American Revolution and what it still means today.

Carp devotes an intriguing chapter on the history of the British East India Company (EIC) and the important role it played in helping a not quite mature system of government maintain its empire for many years prior to the Revolution. EIC's antics will remind American readers of companies such as Halliburton, Enron, and others whose escapades have made headlines and been the subject of intense political controversy. The economic power the EIC enjoyed as a chartered company with certain monopoly rights intensified the attention paid to it by the American colonists and in Parliament.

Defiance of the Patriots also does a good job explaining why Bostonians felt so strongly opposed to legislation that gave the EIC a monopoly on the American tea trade, the Tea Act, which actually LOWERED the price of tea even with the attachment of taxes dedicated towards general revenue (distinguished in colonists' minds from those used for purposes of regulating trade). The reduction in price came with strings that could, in a less benign setting, lead to London's dominance over the colonial legislatures and the loss of liberties enjoyed by the colonists. Carp details England's reprisals and the events that followed the Tea Party, demonstrating how it set off events that led directly to Lexington and Concord less than two years later.

While detailing the events before and after the Tea Party, Carp also explains the tea trade itself and tea's important role in colonial society. Put simply, Americans were tea crazy, and the ritual of tea service and drinking permeated colonial life from top to bottom. It was not a coincidence that tea was at the center of the controversy. Americans relationship with tea and their determination to wean themselves from it as a matter of principle is another major theme as tea became synonymous with British tyranny and abstention with determined resistance. Other topics Carp explores are less fruitful, such as the symbolic importance of the choice of Indian disguises and the gender issues that arose resulting from the determination made by men to boycott something central to the lives of women, who had little say in the matter. In fact, the entire final chapter detailing the limits of the Revolution and the Founders' conceptions of freedom has the feeling of being tacked on solely for the purposes of allowing Carp to avoid charges that he's just interested in "dead white men" because he wrote a book about events concerning, well, mostly dead white men.

In a few places the writing can be dry and academic (mostly those pertaining to issues of race and gender). Happily, though, these parts are short and the reader's attention never flags even if it might falter from time to time. If you're looking for a more narrative driven "story" focused on famous individuals, you might be a little disappointed in Defiance of the Patriots. Readers seeking a better understanding of the Tea Party's causes and importance and a robust discussion of the many related issues involved will enjoy Defiance of the Patriots.

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