

# No taxation without representation: 250 years since Boston Tea Party







Allison Brophy Champion

Local commemorations of the 250th Anniversary of the Boston Tea Party will be held this Saturday in Culpeper and Warrenton, and elsewhere around the nation, as part of a coordinated remembrance of the famous political protest on Dec. 16, 1773, in Massachusetts.

A pint of Indian tea will be destroyed at 8 p.m. Saturday in Yowell Meadow Park in unison with the Sons of the American Revolution in Boston and across the country. Culpeper Minutemen Daughters & Sons of the American Revolution are sponsoring the local ceremony, starting at 7:45 p.m.

They will also be destroying Indian tea at 8 p.m. on Dec. 16 on the courthouse steps in Warrenton.

“The nature of this event enacted by American Colonists, generally known as the ‘Sons of Liberty,’ was in defiance of the tax on tea which was seen as unlawful ‘taxation without representation,’” according to a resolution adopted by president general of the Sons of the American Revolution.

It’s a time of celebration for every patriotic American, according to the resolution, urging all to “join in unison to ‘destroy tea’ as our Patriot Ancestors did 250 years before, be that by imbibing, sharing or tossing of tea, as the case may be, and general merrymaking.”

Would-be 2nd U.S President John Adams wrote about the protest in his diary, Dec. 17, 1773, according to the National Archives: “The People should never rise, without doing something to be remembered — something notable and striking. This Destruction of the Tea is so bold, so daring, so firm, intrepid and inflexible, and it must have so important Consequences, and so lasting, that I can’t but consider it as an Epocha in History.”

Culpeper Minutemen SAR will be flying its 250th Flag at the tea tossing event in anticipation of the nation’s major anniversary in 2026.

The U.S. Semiquincentennial Commission in charge of the 250th unveiled a new branding initiative last week aimed at uniting a divided nation as its moves closer to its 250th birthday.

“This is a time to reflect on the rich stories that shaped our democracy, and one such story is the Yorktown Tea Party. While the Boston Tea Party is familiar to most, many Virginians remain oblivious to the powerful act of resistance that unfolded in their own backyard. Understanding the Yorktown Tea Party allows us to gain a deeper understanding of our shared history and appreciate the diverse voices that helped pave the way for American independence,” according to a release from Mike Frontiero, spokesman, VA250 Commission.

The Yorktown Tea Party will be marked with a weeklong commemoration next November.

“It’s crucial to remember that the Boston Tea Party was not an isolated incident,” said Michael Steen, director of education at the Watermen’s Museum and chair of the Yorktown Tea Party 250th Anniversary Planning Committee.

Similar protests against British taxation and the lack of colonial representation in Parliament occurred throughout the colonies, including Charleston, South Carolina, which commemorated the 250th anniversary of its tea party on Dec. 3; Philadelphia, Pennsylvania; Wilmington and Edenton, North Carolina; Annapolis, Maryland; and Greenwich, New Jersey.

York County residents learned that despite the passage of a resolution to boycott such English goods as tea, Williamsburg merchant John Prentis had ordered tea from London, according to a VA250 release. In retaliation, members of the York County Committee of Safety paraded from the Swan Tavern on Main Street in Yorktown to the waterfront docks on Nov. 7, 1774. They climbed aboard the ship Virginia and emptied two half chests of tea into the York River.

“The Yorktown Tea Party was a bold and defiant act that echoed the spirit of the Boston Tea Party 11 months earlier and sent a clear message to the British authorities that Virginians were united in their opposition to taxation without representation. This event, along with countless others, fueled the growing revolutionary spirit that ultimately led to the American Revolution.”

